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PREFACE

THIS book has been written for those who, with an interest in Indian history and its monuments or art and architecture, have no specialized knowledge and want a reliable background to give their visits to ancient sites some significance and to offset the unfounded legends or sheer nonsense so enthusiastically supplied by would-be guides at the various monuments. Selection has been inevitable and based on two factors: first that the places chosen should be representative of all periods of Indian history, and, second, that I should have visited them personally. The second factor has resulted in limiting the scope of the book to northern and western India, but this has not prevented fulfilment of the first, for the monuments described range in date from the second millennium B.C. at Mohenjo-daro, through the first three or four centuries B.C. at Taxila, Sanchi and Muttra to the early medieval periods at Ajanta, Ellora and Mount Abu, and so to the Islamic conquest of the late twelfth century at Delhi, with subsequent Muslim monuments there and at Daulatabad, and with the seventeenth-century Mogul period represented at Fatehpur Sikri and Agra. The title—*Some Ancient Cities of India*—while it may not apply strictly to monastic or religious settlements such as Sanchi or Abu, does at least avoid the pedantry of a word like 'communities' or the aridity of 'sites'.

As this book deals largely with works of art a decision had to be made between two lines of approach to artistic criticism—a colourless statement or an expression of personal taste. The publishers have agreed with me in preferring the latter: it is I feel the more honest course and I can only hope that even if my remarks may at times infuriate the reader he may thereby be stimulated to clarify his own views on the work of art in question.

The substance of Chapter II originally appeared as an essay in *Longmans Miscellany 1943*, and I am indebted to Messrs Longmans Green and Col. Ltd for permission to republish it here in revised and somewhat abridged form. The site plans of Muttra and Daulatabad are drawn for the first time from field sketches, and the plan of the house in the Bhir Mound at Taxila is made from an unpublished drawing kindly placed at my disposal by the Director-General of Archaeology in India. The remaining plans are re-drawn from those in existing publications and the sources of the half-tone plates are individually acknowledged.

I am glad to have an opportunity of thanking those fellow archaeologists who, like myself, have found themselves in India during the past few years, whether in uniform or not. Dr R. E. Mortimer Wheeler, the Director-General of Archaeology in India, has given me every help and facility on behalf of his Department, and has kindly read the chapter on Taxila in draft and provided several illustrations for the book. Major T. G. E. Powell and Major P. W. Murray Threipland joined with me in field-work and in much discussion, and the latter most kindly took over the responsibility of the proofs on my return to England.

S. P.

New Delhi
February 1945

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HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

To present the history of a country the size of India for more than four thousand years within the limits of a chapter of such a book as this is to invite every criticism of superficiality. But it is essential to sketch some sort of coherent background against which the reader can set the sites he visits, and to give a few main dates to tie the Indian sequence to world history at large.

One or two general points need emphasizing at the beginning, the first being the geography of the Indian sub-continent in its relation to human settlement. Basically it is divided into two natural regions, with a dividing line running roughly from the Gulf of Cambay to the Himalayas beyond Bareilly—a line which approximately marks the western limit of the summer monsoon rains and differentiates between the areas in which wheat and rice are respectively the staple cereal crops. Northwest of this line is a region forming part of a geographical entity including Iran and Afghanistan as well as Arabia, and in the history of India we see this region as one of *assimilation*, where new peoples and ideas from the west invade and mix in constant succession. But eastwards of the Rajputana Desert and the Aravalli Range is 'Indian India', an area of *isolation* in which new ideas penetrate slowly and incompletely and in which cultures develop and decay with little outside contact save that afforded by the sea-routes from west and east. The Ganges Valley with its tributary streams offers an important corridor of assimilation eastwards, and this region of mixed cultural elements has formed, time and time again, the focus for successive attempts at a partial unification of the Indian peoples.

A second point of importance is that we do not find, and

should not look for, an inherent element of progress in Indian history — no organic evolution of institutions to changing human needs, no developments of material culture nor the gradual spread of higher standards of living to a constantly increasing proportion of the inhabitants. The pattern and standard of material culture in India, set by the second millennium B.C., has not radically changed to this day, so that, except for imperfectly assimilated western elements in, for example, cities and railways, India presents itself to us today as a country medieval where it is not prehistoric. 'One might say', writes a French historian of India, 'that Asia was in all historical periods in a state comparable with the Middle Ages, in that Asia always lived according to a traditional order, accompanied by a scholastic science.' Throughout Indian history indeed we see, instead of as in the west an evolving process, however erratic, the monotonous rhythm of periods of disrupted anarchy of small ineffectual states alternating with the forcible amalgamation of these into empires of various sizes and under rulers who range from the benevolent Asoka to fanatical tyrants like Mohammed Tughlaq.

Finally, a word on historical sources. Reliable chronology of the earlier Indian dynasties and events can only be obtained by synchronisms established in the west, where moreover factual records by outside observers sometimes exist to check the vague legends which constitute the indigenous records, and it therefore becomes inevitable that the area of assimilation is the better documented, and much of the history of India has to be written in terms of the northwest. The history of the kingdoms of the south is frequently very obscure, and in proportion as reliable sources vary, so must our history be unequally distributed.

The first settlements we can identify in India are the remains of villages in Baluchistan which may go back to 3500 or even 4000 B.C., and which were occupied by people living a primitive agricultural life and sharing cultural features in common with

similar groups in Iran. The first fairly definite date that can be established for these settlements is 3000–2800 B.C., when there is evidence of trading contacts between the Makran and Early Dynastic Sumer—the time of the famous 'Royal Tombs' of Ur—but the Baluchi villages were primitive indeed compared with the contemporary cities of Iraq. Yet by 2400–2300 imports were arriving in Mesopotamia from a civilization established in the Punjab and the Indus Valley which was in all respects the equal of that of Sumer and Akkad, with huge brick-built cities, such as those described in Chapter II, a written script and an imperial organization embracing a territory from Kathiawar to the Himalayas and from Rajputana to Baluchistan. The immediate antecedents of this Harappa civilization are unknown, and although it shares economic essentials with the contemporary civilizations of the ancient east, it has a highly individual character which can already be recognized as essentially Indian.

How this empire collapsed we do not know, nor at what precise date, but barbarian settlements among the deserted ruins of the latest occupation levels of the towns can probably be dated about 1500 B.C. We are in the early Indian Dark Ages, without direct archaeological evidence or that from inscriptions, but literary evidence of a most remarkable kind is available that may go back to round about 1200 B.C. This is contained in the Hindu religious book known as the *Rigveda*, a collection of hymns, prayers and magic spells made by invaders into India from the northwest who spoke an Aryan language, and which on linguistic and other internal evidence is believed to date from the first millennium B.C., but was only preserved in oral tradition until a hundred and fifty years ago. The dating of the *Rigveda*, and its companion the Iranian *Avesta*, is not beyond dispute, though archaeology can confirm the major folk-movements in that period and can provide written evidence of gods with Vedic names being quoted in the semi-Indo-European Hittite language about 1400 B.C. In India concrete

evidence of the Aryans, with their petty rajas raiding and charioteering, drinking and dicing, fighting and singing psalms 'sometimes true, genuine and even sublime, but frequently childish, vulgar and obscene',[1] has yet to be found.

From their primary colonization of the Punjab the Aryans pressed eastwards into the Gangetic plain, and their culture became assimilated with those Indian elements already perceptible in the Harappa culture and doubtless existing elsewhere in the area of isolation, to form the syncretic philosophy of Hinduism. Basing his teaching on the later Brahmanical concepts such as are seen in the *Upanishads*, a young prince of a petty state in the Nepal terai became an ascetic, gained a following and died about 480 B.C. as the Buddha. Of his time, the stone ramparts of Old Rajgir in the Patna District are probably the only visible remains today, and of the contemporary Achaemenid satrapy of Sind, added by Darius to his dominions in 518–19, and held for some forty years, no traces remain.

In the fourth century B.C., however, we enter into a period of ancient Indian history distinguished alike for its comparatively full documentary and architectural record and for the outstanding historical characters it contains (see for instance Chapter III). The Indian campaign of Alexander, and the Mauryan dynasty founded by Chandragupta and raised to its peak by Asoka, make the century from 327 B.C. a huge stage on which the parts are played by giants. The details of Alexander's entry to northern India, his friendly reception at Taxila in 326, his subsequent battle against the Pauravas and his advance to the Beas by July of that year; the mutiny and subsequent retreat, fighting rearguard actions, down the Indus, and the final terrible Anabasis across the Makran to Susa in 324 are all well known, and if the campaign itself had little permanent effect even on northwest India, the founding of Greek colonies outside its frontiers in Arachosia and Bactria

[1] Max Müller, *Introduction to the Rigveda-śamhita.*

was ultimately to have an enduring influence on Indian history. Alexander had indeed re-established the link between India and the countries to the west and north.

The brilliance and power of the Persian Achaemenid dynasty had inevitably become a legend and a wonder outside its own boundaries, and within a year or two of Alexander's withdrawal the first of the great Indian despots known to us by name usurped, in a palace revolution, the then reigning Nanda dynasty to set up that of the Mauryas in emulation of Cyrus and Darius. Chandragupta Maurya, aided by his Machiavellian counsellor Kautilya (whose book of precepts for princes has come down to us), began with ruthless efficiency to bring about the first partial unification of India since Harappa times, concluded a favourable treaty with Seleucus Niçator, the founder of the Seleucid dynasty of Syria and Iraq, about 302, married Seleucus' daughter, and from his palace-city at Patna (built on Persepolitan models) organized his newly-won empire, extending from Afghanistan to Bengal, and south to the Narbada River, on a firm authoritarian foundation. It was on this basis of conquest, diplomacy and bureaucracy that his grandson, the great King Asoka, was able to build his even greater Kingdom of Earthly Righteousness between 273 and 232 B.C. His unification of the divergent Brahmanical and Buddhist teachings into a state religion, promulgated by edicts carved on rocks and pillars (such as those at Sanchi or Delhi mentioned in this book) in formulae recalling those of the Achaemenids, seems to have been effective over almost all India except the extreme south, and to his reign belongs the first stone architectural style, copying wooden prototypes, yet recognized in India.

But the Mauryan dictatorship, based as it was on exceptional individuals, did not survive. About 185 came more court intrigue and revolution, and Pushyamitra grasped the already diminishing central power to form the dynasty of the Sungas, at a time when, following the revolt of Bactria, the semi-hellenized tribes of the northwest were penetrating into India as far

as Kathiawar, Muttra and Patna, and later meeting the Sungas in open battle. In the Deccan the Andhra dynasty, founded about 230 B.C., was ruling, and the great stupas of Sanchi (Chapter IV) belong to this time; further south the Pandyas were in a position to send an embassy to Augustus in 20 B.C. From these confused dark ages and folk migrations of the first two centuries B.C. emerges a more or less coherent dynasty in the north about A.D. 40, when the Kushans bound together at least a confederacy of tribes under such kings as Kanishka, whose portrait-statue at Muttra (described in this book in Chapter V) has an inscription proclaiming him as the Great King, King of Kings, of an empire within India.

With the end of the Kushan power about A.D. 180 there is a gap in our knowledge until the emergence, about 318, of a new dynasty reigning in the Ganges Valley under a famously-named king, Chandragupta I, and the Gupta sovereigns between this date and about 480 established and maintained rule over an empire considerable in extent in north and east India and outstanding for its development of art, architecture and literature. It was at this time (399–414) that the famous Chinese Buddhist pilgrim, Fa Hien, visited the sacred sites of his faith throughout India and compiled his objective travel-journal so useful to historians today.

But the familiar rhythm repeated itself, and by about A.D. 500 the White Huns had established themselves in the Punjab and another period of chaos supervened for a century, until the tribes of northern India were brought under subjection and forcibly welded into an empire by Harsha (606–47), when under his rule some approach to a civilization again became established. During his reign the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang travelled in India and wrote a detailed journal. In the Deccan the long line of the Andhras had terminated about A.D. 225, and around 550 the Chalukyas had emerged and were maintaining a civilization which counted among its achievements the Ajanta paintings and could in the political sphere exchange

embassies with the Persian monarch Chosroes II in 626–8 (Chapter VI). Elsewhere, local lines of rajas were maintaining their little states.

By now, in the middle of the seventh century A.D., we are on the eve of another great folk movement into India from the northwest, forming the culmination of a process which we have seen to be continuous if fluctuating since the days of the invaders from Bactria in the second century B.C., and emanating from the same region, today Afghanistan, where Parthians, Sakas, Kushans and Huns had previously found a rallying point for invasion. And now religious fanaticism was ready to increase the ferocity and sanctify the brutality of the invaders. The intolerant faith of Islam was spreading like a prairie fire: the *jihad* was being all too successfully preached as a justification for plunder and rapine. By 712 Sind was annexed by the Muslims from the west, and after the death of Harsha, in Vincent Smith's words 'India instantly reverted to her normal condition of anarchical autonomy', with petty Hindu dynasties, notably that of Kanauj, continuing to carry on some form of government in the north. Delhi (described in Chapter IX) was founded as a Hindu city in 993, and was to survive for two centuries as such—two centuries which, commencing with the raids of Mohammed of Ghor in the beginning of the eleventh century, are a bloodstained tale of the gathering force of the Muslim invasions, until in the opening years of the thirteenth century the subjugation of northern India—the familiar area of assimilation—was complete.

From the establishment of the first Muslim dynasty in Delhi in 1193 we have an abundance of details and a sure chronology. But the details seem only to underline or elaborate a scheme of things already familiar in Indian history—the rule of the typical despot, who may be relatively benevolent or outrageously tyrannical, with the formation of a palace culture supported on a vast agricultural population who if not slaves in name are at least serfs by economic compulsion. Empires of this type,

alternating with periods of anarchy and wars of succession, make up the pattern of India's past, and the history of the Muslim despots is essentially that of the dynasties of earlier times, from the Mauryas to Harsha, amplified by details of personality or incident that time has lost or partisan chroniclers suppressed from the earlier record.

The annals of the Sultans of Delhi present a picture of violence, treachery, uncontrolled fanaticism, into which the irruption of Timur in 1398 introduces an interval of even greater barbaric relapse. The Sultanate extended not only over northwest India but the Deccan and the Coromandel coast, and—it must be remembered—produced works of art and architecture of a high level of excellence (described in Chapters IX and X) despite the barbarity of the actual rulers and their policy. Bengal had become independent from 1340 and other more or less autonomous Muslim states existed in Malwa, Gujerat and Kashmir, while of the remaining Hindu dynasties that of Vijayanagar in south India is notable, and preserved its independence from 1336 to 1646.

In 1526 a fresh dynasty was however set up in north India that was rapidly to become a famous wonder and mystery to the European world—Babur, descendant of both Timur and Genghiz Khan, invaded from Kabul and founded the dynasty of the 'Grand Moguls' which in his grandson Akbar produced a ruler who shares with Asoka the claim to have brought nearly the whole of India under one king. Akbar, succeeding Humayun in 1556, set out on a deliberate aggressive policy of subjugation, coupled with a curious intellectual interest in all forms of religious experience and expression which he attempted to combine in a monotheistic state religion which successfully alienated Hindus and Muslims alike and was never adopted outside the court. His palace city of Fatehpur Sikri is described in Chapter XI. By the time of his death in 1605 his empire extended southwards to the Godavari River and eastwards to the mouths of the Ganges. But this empire was no more

permanent than his too-tolerant religious syncretism, and although in his reign and in those of his successors craftsmanship and architecture produced triumphant monuments of beauty perpetuating the names of Akbar, Jahangir and Shahjahan, and forming the subject-matter of much of this book (see for instance Chapters IX to XII), yet the ensuing bigotry and iconoclasm of Aurangzeb (1659–1707) led the way to the decay of the Moguls and the fragmentation of India once again into the immemorial condition of petty states which had so often in her history intervened between periods of civilization under strong central rule.

For the new rulers had already come, and were the first to break the sequence of invasions from the northwest: Europeans and especially the British had infiltrated into India by the seaways since the sixteenth century, and two hundred years later the Buddhist monks of Ceylon, who had piously kept a chronicle since the death of the Buddha, ended the annals in 1798 with the words: 'The people calling themselves Ingirisi have set their hand over all the kingdom.' India was once again to be brought forcibly from decadence and anarchy to one of its recurrent phases of comparative stability under authority imposed by a centralized government composed, not by any means for the first time, of foreigners.

Chapter II

PREHISTORIC WESTERN INDIA AND MOHENJO-DARO

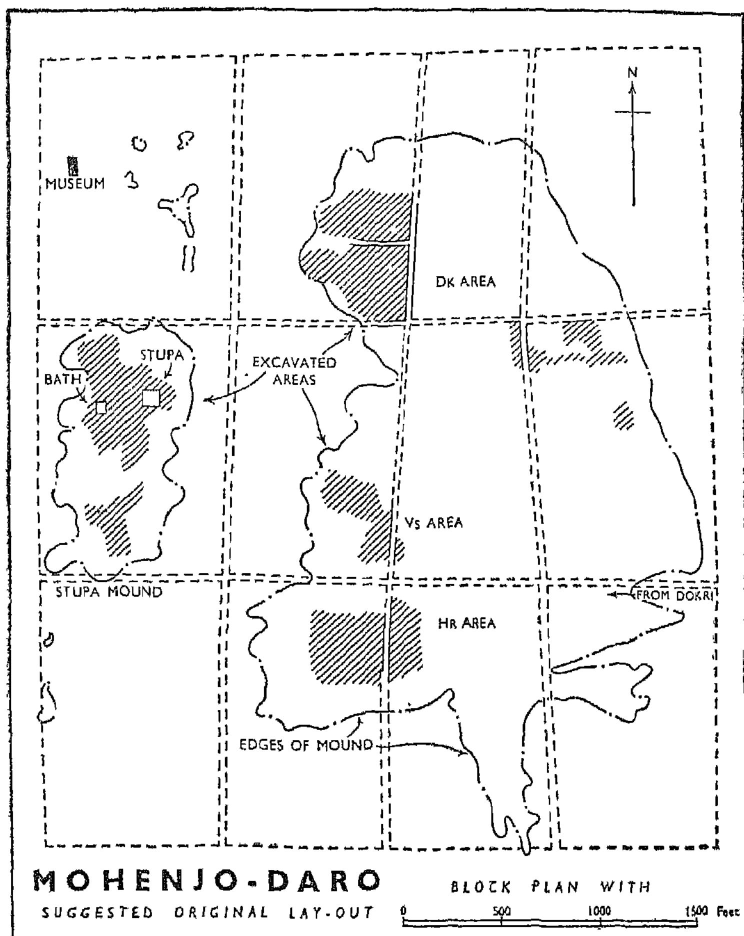
In this chapter an outline sketch is given of the growth of the first Indian civilized communities—the villages and towns that mark the settled life of the agriculturalist and differentiate him from the unstable hand-to-mouth hunting and food-gathering communities of the earliest savagery. This ancient civilization is the foundation of all subsequent town and village life in India, and one of its excavated sites, the city of Mohenjo-daro in Sind, gives an impressive picture of western Indian civic culture in the third millennium B.C. A few detailed notes for the visitor to this site are given at the end of the chapter.

The story begins, not in India, but in Iran. Up to the present we have found no traces of early civilization in the Indus Valley or in Baluchistan which can be dated as early as the first village communities of agriculturalists which mark the beginnings of civilization in Iraq and Iran, while the earliest Indian settlements we can identify show traces of their connexion with already well-established centres of early culture further west. Before 4000 B.C. small villages of settled farmers had been established at oases and by rivers on the edge of the Persian desert, with clear indications that the peasant arts and crafts embodied in them were by no means in their infancy. These first humble beginnings of civilization spread eastwards from the Iranian uplands, for in the Zhob Valley of Baluchistan, near Fort Sandeman and Loralai, have been found the remains of small villages which had been built and occupied by people who made and decorated their pottery in the same distinctive manner as the inhabitants of northern Iran, whose settlements, of about 3000 B.C. or earlier, are known from Tabriz to Hissar

near Damghan and southwards to Giyan near Nihavend and Sialk near Kashan. What route these people followed is not clear, but earlier farming communities allied to those of the Kashan neighbourhood had a settlement at Anau near Ashkabad in Russian Turkestan, and the caravan route eastwards to Balkh and beyond, so important in later times as a link between North Persia and Central Asia, gives a hint as to the probable way by which these bearers of the elements of civilization found their way to northern Baluchistan. And round about the same time, and by an unknown but presumably overland route, people arrived to make settlements in southern Baluchistan who were in a comparable state of civilization to that of the Loralai villagers but whose traditions in pot decoration seem to link them with the inhabitants of South Persia or Iraq rather than with the northerners.

So Baluchistan, a less arid region five thousand years ago than today, was being settled by numerous small groups and tribes of people whose ancestors had learnt the arts of agriculture and the technique of organizing small self-sufficing village communities in the Iranian uplands. Dating in years is very difficult for widely scattered illiterate communities in remote antiquity, but it seems unlikely that this colonization of western India was much later than 3000 B.C. and it may well have been a century or two earlier, while the settlements must have flourished for five hundred years and more after their first foundation. Even if the 'civilization' of these communities is little more than the settlement of groups of agriculturalists in small static communities, their existence forms the essential background for the advances in the technique of living which we shall meet later in the Indus Valley as elsewhere in the ancient east.

The prehistoric Baluchistan villages were small, not usually it seems more than two acres in extent, and from the virtual absence of defences one can infer a peaceful co-existence of groups of small farmers. Humped cattle were bred, grain



MOHENJO-DARO

BLOCK PLAN WITH SUGGESTED ORIGINAL LAY-OUT

As we know it, the Harappa civilization does not seem to be much older than the time of Sargon of Akkad (about 2300 B.C.), by which time many of the great towns of Sumer were already old foundations, and if in its early and as yet undiscovered phases it resembled these in detail, by its maturity its traditions had diverged very markedly. The regular planning and lay-out of its towns is unknown elsewhere in the ancient east, where the rabbit-warren tradition of town-building so alive today has its roots in remote antiquity (in India such planning was hardly to be seen again until the building of the British cantonments in the last century), while the justly famous drains of Mohenjo-daro and Harappa show a concern for sanitation equally unparalleled in the ancient or the modern orient. Faced with the problem of building permanent houses in a region of periodic torrential rain (when the monsoon extended further west than it does today) the Harappa folk transformed the unbaked clay brick, all too apt to return to its pristine mud, into the baked brick with an almost indefinite life—a technological advance only possible in a region which, unlike Sumer, could provide the immense amount of timber necessary for the firing of so many million bricks.

Since the time of the excavation of the two cities of Mohenjo-daro and Harappa it has been considered that neither showed evidence of a dominating palace or temple block, but the Director-General of Archaeology in India, Dr R. E. Mortimer Wheeler, has, in a recent re-examination of the sites, come to a conclusion, which I share, and recognized in the great Stupa Mound of Mohenjo-daro, on a platform of brick twenty feet high, and in the AB mound at Harappa with its traces of a defensive wall and probable bastion turrets, the citadels of a ruler, be he emperor or priest-king.[1] Otherwise the houses of the town show variations in size implying variations in income,

[1] I am indebted to Dr Wheeler for permission to mention this extremely important observation made to me in conversation in 1944, and not yet published by him.

but little more, though at Harappa there is a workmen's quarter of small identically-planned cottages mean enough for any contemporary coolie lines, adjacent to a huge granary and what are probably a series of corn-grinding platforms. In effect we see in the towns of the Harappa civilization a merchant class living on terms of approximate material equality beneath the fortified citadel of the ruler. But although prosperity is implicit in the cities, one curious feature is immediately apparent: there is no public art, nothing to relieve the blank cubes of rooms, nothing to mitigate the monotony of the unvarying facades, and the artistic output is confined to small private possessions—jewellery, amulets and the like. In the Harappa civilization we look in vain for the inventive originality that invigorates the less highly organized peasant communities of the Baluchi hills—the Indus Valley commercial centres and their outlying trade marts imply all too effectively the elaborate organization of an urban mercantile class whose products lack not only the barbaric spontaneity of the older and more primitive cultures but even the cheery *nouveau riche* vulgarity of Early Dynastic Sumer as seen in the Royal Tombs of Ur, and display instead a dead level of bourgeois mediocrity in almost every branch of the visual arts and crafts.

One of the surprising features of the Harappa civilization is its utter collapse and submergence in the face of the barbarian inroads from the northwest which started about 1500 B.C. Unless it was already effete and lifeless, one would expect some evidence of the civic culture of the Indus resisting or absorbing the invaders, but we find nothing of the kind. The last inhabitants of the cities walk along the same street plan and make and use and wear articles identical with those of their forefathers three or five centuries before them, and then is the end. The cities become deserted, with at most a squalid barbarian village occupying the forgotten broken ruins. But I think we may find a clue to this lack of initiative in the curious but essential element of stagnation in Harappa art, so well seen, to take one

instance, in the well-known inscribed stone amulet-seals with intaglio carvings of animals. These normally reach a high standard of technical skill, yet in carvings from all periods of the cities' occupation we can see no development, no innovations, no individuality. The technique is fossilized from the start, and even the relatively primitive script is not improved. The very qualities which gave the Harappa civilization its initial brilliant success among the urban centres of the ancient east may, paradoxically, have brought about its downfall. It was an extremely specialized adaptation of large communities of men to town life in circumstances of climate and terrain which were by no means easy, and any disturbance of the delicately balanced adjustment might spell disaster. And the unchanging traditionalism of this system was preserved by isolation—the outside contacts of the Harappa civilization were too slight to allow of new ideas reaching the Indus or the Punjab from the west, and although some Harappa objects were reaching Iraq by the time of Sargon of Akkad (about 2300 B.C.) practically no Sumerian or other foreign influence filtered back, and Indian isolationism was practically complete.

In North Persia we have in the archaeological record an intimation of what was taking place elsewhere in the years following 2000 B.C. Here, a little town, now the mound of Hissar near Damghan, founded probably a thousand years before by people related to those who built the first villages near Loralai, had been receiving and absorbing people and ideas from the barbarian north, from the steppes eastwards of the Caspian Sea, until, by a date which I think to be some time about 1500 B.C., the town was rebuilt, to be peopled exclusively by these folk, whose cemeteries contain the graves of men buried with the equipment of warrior chiefs. Allied people seem to have been living at Anau near Ashkabad, again on an anciently founded site: some of them, or at least tools and ornaments made by them, reached India, to turn up with other evidence of a move of peoples from the west into the Indus

Valley, not in the last phases of the brick-built towns, but in miserable villages of mud and re-used brickbats built on the flattened ruins, villages inhabited by an illiterate and barbarous population. With the archaeological evidence of this collapse of civilizations and the incoming of the barbarians from the north and west into India we must somehow associate the authors of the earliest Vedic hymns. We are dealing with the Aryans, and are a long way from the urban civilities of Harappa, and well into the Indian Dark Ages.

Notes for the Visitor to Mohenjo-daro

Of the two cities of the Harappa civilization excavated, Harappa in the Punjab is a site only to be visited by the professional archaeologist. Mohenjo-daro however is sufficiently well preserved to form an understandable site to the non-expert, and is in fact both interesting and impressive. The site lies in the Sind Desert, eight miles in a tonga from the railway station of Dokri: accommodation can be arranged in the Archaeological Survey's bungalow if warning is given and food is taken.

The visitor in his tonga enters the site from the east with the Indus behind him—the roadway between the whitish brick-strewn mounds being on the line of an original main east-west street of the ancient city. The excavated foundations of buildings and further streets will be seen on both sides, in front a large mound some 30 feet high with a ruined drum-shaped structure on the top (the remains of a Buddhist stupa of the early centuries A.D.). The best course is to drive past this and get out at the Museum, where plans of the site are displayed in addition to the finds from the excavations, and the general lay-out can be appreciated.

The main sites to see are the Stupa Mound and the DK area. The essential feature of the former is that its total height is not, as elsewhere on the site, the accumulated debris of successive occupations, but for at least twenty feet from the bottom is an artificial brick platform forming the base of an oblong citadel-


Archaeological Survey of India

AIR VIEW OF PART OF THE MOHENJO-DARO EXCAVATIONS SHOWING LAY-OUT OF STREETS AND HOUSES. MIDDLE OF THIRD MILLENNIUM B.C.



Archaeological Survey of India

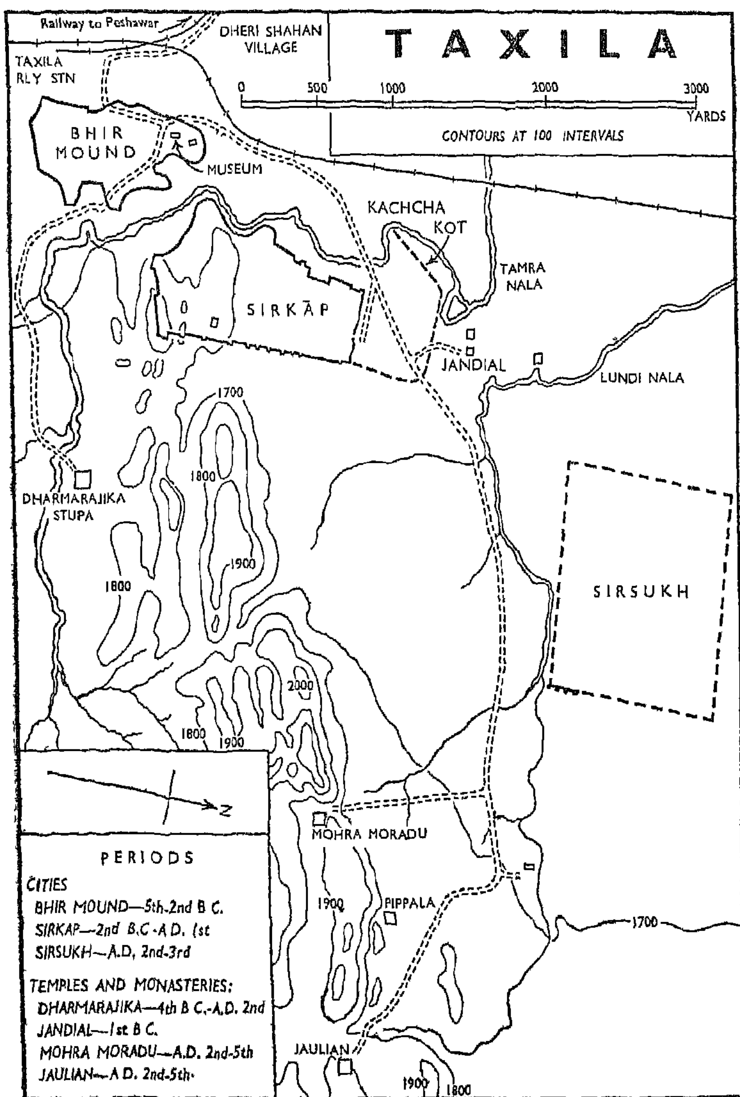
MOHENJO-DARO: REMAINS OF BRICK-BUILT HOUSES OF MID-THIRD MILLENNIUM B.C., AFTER EXCAVATION

like structure containing various large buildings and a great ritual bath, or what on a medieval Hindu temple site would be the recognized adjunct of a 'tank'. Bathrooms and well-made drains can be seen around the bath area, and the main drain from the great bath itself is a huge vaulted passage. There is a similar but largely unexcavated citadel-block at Harappa, apparently also situated on the western side of the city.

The DK area is a representative collection of town houses, shops, courts, alleys, etc., all within the main gridiron street plan, and is important on account of the large numbers of successive phases of rebuilding it contains. The street level on which one walks today is the earliest (probably 2500 B.C. or so) and the high walls of flanking houses are really successive reconstructions on the old foundations, so that doors and drains appear to open onto nothing ten feet above one's head, where at a later stage of the city's history the ground level had established itself. The wells, too, look like chimneys now the accumulated soil into which they were dug and in which their brick steyning was successively raised has been dug away. From bottom to top these walls cover half a millennium—long enough to take us from the present day back to the Wars of the Roses in England or the earliest Lodi tombs at Delhi—and yet life in the city was unchanged from beginning to end.

Elsewhere at Mohenjo-daro further ranges of streets and houses can be followed showing minor points of interest, but usually repeating the features seen in the DK area.

The Baluchistan sites are practically all inaccessible to the ordinary visitor, but near Quetta three *tells* representing the accumulated remains of series of prehistoric mud houses can be seen by the main road leading to the Mian Ghundi levy post, strewn with potsherds dating at least from the second and perhaps from the third millennium B.C., and certainly earlier than Mohenjo-daro by some centuries.


TAXILA
Railway to Peshawar
DHERI SHAHAN VILLAGE
TAXILA RLY STN
0
500
1000
2000
3000
YARDS
CONTOURS AT 100 INTERVALS
BHIR MOUND
MUSEUM
KACHCHA KOT
TAMRA NALA
SIRKĀP
JANDIAL
LUNDI NALA
1700
1800
1900
2000
DHARMARAJIKA STUPA
SIRSUKH
MOHRA MORADU
PIPPALA
JAULIAN
PERIODS
CITIES
BHIR MOUND—5th-2nd B C.
SIRKAP—2nd B.C.-A.D. 1st
SIRSUKH—A.D. 2nd-3rd
TEMPLES AND MONASTERIES:
DHARMARAJIKA—4th B C.-A.D. 2nd
JANDIAL—1st B C.
MOHRA MORADU—A.D. 2nd-5th
JAULIAN—A D. 2nd-5th

Chapter III

TAXILA

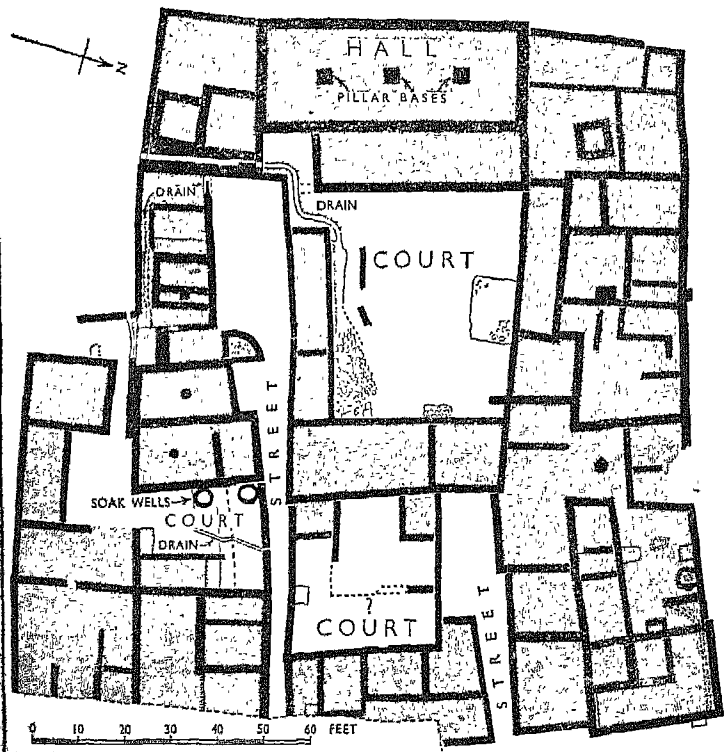
OF all the great natural frontiers of the world, that of north-west India is surely one of the most dramatic, the richest in historical content, the most striking in its geographical implications. Here there converge, upon the plains of the Indus and the Five Rivers of the Punjab, natural routes from the eastern Mediterranean and the Caucasus; from the Russian steppes—Oxus, Jaxartes and 'the hush'd Chorasmian waste'; from the deserts of Taklamakan, Mongolia and the whole land of China. And along these routes have come Aryans and Greeks, Sakas and Kushans, Bactrians and Huns to disturb and re-create again the pattern of India's early history, while later centuries saw the Islamic invaders from Mohammed of Ghor to Timur, and finally the Moguls. In this region, where the mountains flanking the Khyber Pass break out from the plain in a menacing crescent, and one is subconsciously aware that one is in a country not wholly Indian (and which even, in its brown-pink hills, its terraced wheatfields and its goats scrambling among wild olive trees subtly recalls the Mediterranean lands), one would expect to find, in the archaeological record, evidences of a fascinating mixture of human cultures. Nor is one disappointed in this expectation at Taxila where, by the railway station that one sees from the train so unexpectedly and dramatically bearing the classical name so familiar in the records of Alexander's campaigns, are the extensive remains (covering over twelve square miles) of cities, shrines and temples from at least the fourth or fifth century B.C. to the fifth century A.D., all associated with these recurrent invasions from beyond the mountains. Extensive excavations have been carried out and there is much for the visitor to see on the ground and in the museum on the site.

In the Buddhist legends incorporated in the Jataka stories of the previous incarnations of the Buddha, which were probably compiled at least in the fourth century B.C. and may well include more ancient matter, Taxila appears as a flourishing centre of learning rivalled *only by Benares, claimed as a slightly junior* foundation—a situation not unparalleled in other university towns of later date. Archaeological evidence of this, the earliest Taxila, is not unambiguously available: the great site known as the Bhir Mound which has produced evidence of the earliest occupation at Taxila was found, in Sir John Marshall's excavations, to consist of the superimposed ruins of four periods of settlement, and while the latest and uppermost was fairly clearly of the late third or early second century B.C. there was no direct evidence for dating the lowest. But Dr Mortimer Wheeler's recent excavations in 1944–5 have confirmed the evidence of a hoard of coins previously found in the second stratum containing two silver pieces of Alexander the Great in an unworn condition, and another hoard of about 250 B.C., so that this period should be dated somewhere about 300 B.C., and by inference the earliest settlement may be as ancient as the fifth or even the sixth century B.C.

But when Taxila does enter the light of precisely recorded history it is in no uncertain manner. In 327 Alexander the Great had carried his uninterrupted series of conquests eastwards to Bactria and the region now Afghanistan, and now looked for further exploits in the Indian plains, with their curious legendary associations with the ancient alcoholic victory of Dionysius. By the beginning of 326 he had crossed the Indus near Attock and in February of that year 'descended to the plains and the great city of Taxila' as Strabo puts it, quoting a contemporary's record. He had already been met on crossing the river by an embassy from Ambhi, the ruler of Taxila, who saw, in a tactful alliance with the invader, an opportunity of wiping off scores with a rival princeling whose name the Greeks wrote as Poros and who may have been chief of the Pauravas.

Three days' marches brought Alexander to Taxila, almost certainly the city represented by the second stratum in the Bhir Mound of which considerable areas have been excavated and can be seen by the visitor. Here the army rested, while feasts were eaten, wine drunk, and sumptuous presents were interchanged following the immemorial custom of the ancient world. Eye-witness accounts of the Indian campaign of Alexander were written by more than one of his retinue and survive today at least in quotation, and we read how at Taxila they saw and wondered at the ascetics, Brahmin, Jain and Buddhist, who frequented the place. Onesicritus, himself a pupil of Diogenes and Socrates, was sent by Alexander to talk with these holy men and to report on their doctrines, and much of the ensuing conversation is extant. The excavated remains in the Bhir Mound are not very impressive—small rubble-built houses (originally plastered over) irregularly crowded together along narrow unplanned streets suggest that the visitor's impression of Taxila in Alexander's time would have been little different from that of any small Indian town of today. One fairly large house, with a courtyard and pillared hall and flanked by narrow cul-de-sac alleys, has been excavated in the western part of the Bhir Mound and a plan of this is published here for the first time, with the permission of the Director General of Archaeology.

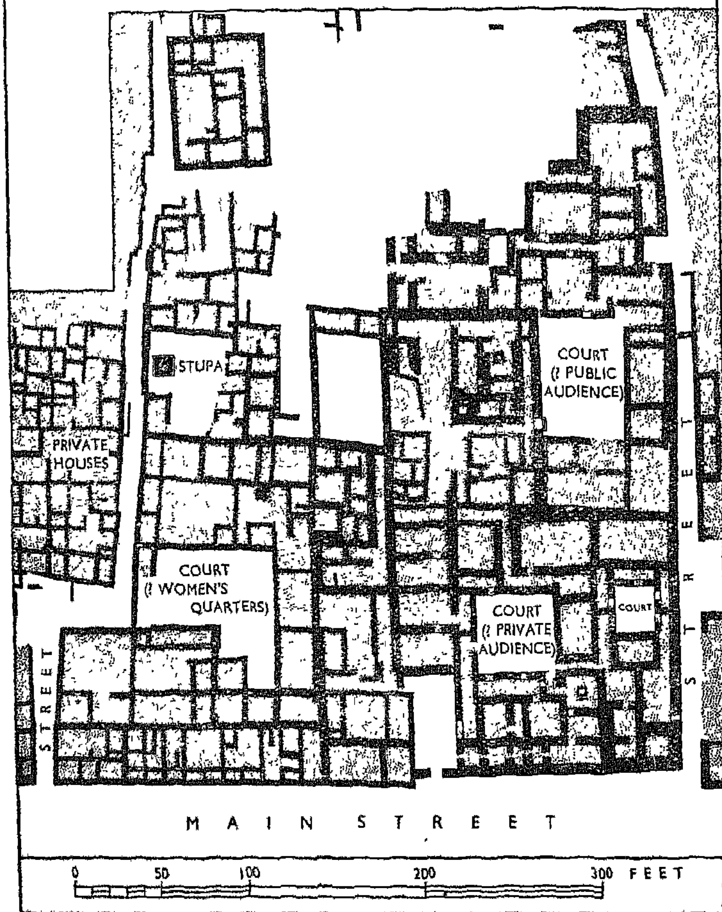
The descent of Alexander and his army upon northwest India was spectacular and brilliant, but of short duration and of small direct consequence to the indigenous cultures. He had however in some degree been a means of linking northern India with the regions to the west, and re-established the connexions with Persia originated by Darius' annexation of western India in 518–19 B.C., and when at the end of the fourth century B.C. the Mauryan dynasty was established under Chandragupta many features of its organization and court ritual were modelled on Persian originals. During the reign of his father Bindusara, Asoka was at Taxila as Viceroy, the main capital of the



TAXILA: HOUSES in BHIR MOUND Probably 4th CENT. B.C
N
HALL
PILLAR BASES
DRAIN
DRAIN
COURT
STREET
SOAK WELLS
COURT
DRAIN
?
COURT
STREET
0 10 20 30 40 50 60 FEET

Mauryan empire being at Pataliputra on the Ganges, and the second city of the Bhir Mound was presumably also that from which the young Asoka ruled, fifty years after Alexander's visit. Archaeological evidence of the Mauryan period at the Bhir Mound includes the characteristic fine burnished black ware (as found elsewhere, for instance at Sanchi and Muttra). In about 273 B.C. Asoka ascended the Mauryan throne and soon began his intense propagation of the Buddhist faith, which largely manifested itself in building shrines, of a type described more fully in Chapter IV, and known as stupas. At Taxila, it is probable that the central core of the great Dharmarajika Stupa, which lies eastwards of the Bhir Mound at the foot of the hills, is an Asokan foundation, though the stupa visible today is a later enlargement.

With the death of Asoka in about 232 B.C. the Mauryan empire began its collapse. Forty years later Demetrios, fourth king of the independent Bactrian dynasty that, centred in the region now Uzbek S.S.R., had seized autonomous power from the Seleucids, increased his territories eastwards by annexing Afghanistan and the Punjab, and a generation or so later a new city under Bactrian rule was founded at Taxila. The Bhir Mound became practically deserted, and a new site was chosen to the northeast at Sirkap, on the other side of the Tamra Nala stream (the *Tiberiopotamos* of classical writers). Here, about 170 B.C., a town was built, and scanty excavated remains of this first city of Sirkap can be seen in the deep excavation in the northwest corner of the stone-walled city below strata representing five successive periods of rebuilding. The ramparts known as the Kachcha Kot lying to the northeast of this site may belong to this time, though their relation to the great stone walls of Sirkap, built soon after the original foundation, is not clear. Defences were needed in these troubled times, and security so near the portal of entry of invaders was hard to obtain. The Saka tribes, fresh from conquests in Bactria and Parthia, established themselves strongly in northwest India by


TAXILA
PROBABLE PALACE AT SIRKAP
OF FIRST CENTURY A.D.
N
STUPA
PRIVATE HOUSES
COURT (? PUBLIC AUDIENCE)
COURT (? WOMEN'S QUARTERS)
COURT (? PRIVATE AUDIENCE)
COURT
STREET
STREET
MAIN STREET
0
50
100
200
300 FEET

the beginning of the first century B.C. and set up dual capitals to north and south at Taxila and Muttra, probably in some degree subordinate to the Arsacid dynasty of Parthia which, by the end of the century, had obtained more direct control of the Punjab with an Indo-Parthian monarch, Azes, ruling from Taxila.

It had been thought that Azes might well have been the builder of the stone walls of Sirkap, but the 1944–5 excavations suggest that these are practically an original feature of the site. The excavations in this city and the clearance of large portions of its bastioned stone walls have produced for the visitor one of the most interesting sites in the Taxila complex, with an impressive demonstration of ancient Greek town-planning. One enters the city through the excavated north gate in the town wall, which averages 15 to 20 feet thick, from which leads an axial main street with regular blocks of buildings (the classical *insulae*) each with a frontage of 110–120 feet divided off by streets at right angles on each side. The foundations of buildings which one sees mainly belong to the first centuries B.C.–A.D., and comprise for the most part private houses and shops. Exceptional structures are the Buddhist or Jain stupas or stupa-bases in rectangular courts opening onto the street: there are particularly good examples on the east side, of which the most interesting is the stupa-base in the seventh insula southwards from the main gate which is in the main of classical Hellenistic design, with Corinthian pilasters, but which includes niches in purely Indian modes, two crowned with relief figures of double-headed eagles—a very intriguing combination of motifs.

There are two other outstanding structures in the visible Sirkap buildings, one religious and one civil. The fifth insula is occupied by a Buddhist chaitya or temple—an apsidal-ended building standing in a temenos or courtyard and having parallels at, for instance, Sanchi (see Chapter IV) or, translated into rock-cut form, at Ajanta and Ellora (see Chapters VI and VII). This must have been a fine and impressive building: in it was found

a hoard of gold and silver objects hidden under a floor and with one piece inscribed with the name of a known individual who lived in the first century A.D., which suggests a hurried deposition of the temple treasures when the invading tribes were once more threatening and even sacking Taxila. The civil building is a large structure, more pretentious than any normal house and forming an unusually large insula 350 by 400 feet, and Sir John Marshall, ingeniously interpreting its arrangement of rooms and courtyards on analogy with Mogul buildings, has suggested that this is in fact a palace either of the ruler of Taxila or of a high official under him. This identification is attractive and carries conviction, and from a palace we may turn to a ruler of Taxila in the first century A.D. on whom centres a remarkable historical tradition. As early as the third century A.D. there was current a legend, known for instance to Origen, that a Christian mission was sent to the Parthians immediately after the death of Christ, and in Syrian tradition this mission was under St Thomas, who is recorded as coming to the court of a King Gundaphar who was in India, about A.D. 40. Now the evidence of archaeology shows that there was a Parthian king Gondophares ruling in the Punjab and probably at Taxila at this time, and the survival of such an obscure personage in the Syrian legend can only point to a genuine tradition connecting him with a Christian mission which may or may not have been led by St Thomas. It would be pleasant to associate this tradition with Taxila, and to think that in the streets of the successive cities there had, over the centuries, walked men who had in their day respectively known those three greatest teachers of mankind, the Buddha, Socrates and Jesus.

Outside the walled boundaries of Sirkap religious communities were, in this period of two centuries before and after the birth of Christ, also constructing temples and shrines. Just beyond the Kachcha Kot to the north is a most remarkable ruined temple on a mound apparently artificial: particularly remarkable to Europeans since it not only has a plan similar in

most respects to a Greek temple, but it had an entrance with pillars carrying perfectly reputable Ionic capitals. Marshall dates this Jandial Temple as first century B.C., and attributes it to the Zoroastrian fire-worshippers, thinking its massive foundations must have borne a tower suitable for such a cult. At this time too reconstructions and additions were taking place at the ancient Dharmarajika Stupa, which was surrounded by a ring of miniature stupas, some of which were found on excavation to contain interesting ritual deposits.

By the first century A.D. however the recurrent rhythm of barbarian invasion from the northwest was repeated with the irruptions of the Kushans, originally a confederation of tribes whose ancestors had come from Sinkiang and dispossessed the Sakas some three centuries earlier. We shall meet the Kushans again at Muttra, their southern capital, and while Peshawar was chosen as the northern centre of rule they established a town at Taxila, probably after sacking the last settlement on the Sirkap site. The Kushan city was built *de novo* on the flat ground northwest of Sirkap at a site called Sirsukh, and was defended with a nearly rectangular stone wall with frequent half-round bastions with arrow-slits and communicating passages. Little is known of this city, as the conditions have not been favourable for excavation, and our main monuments of the Kushan period at Taxila are the monasteries and shrines which are concentrated in the ridges of the hills rising east from Sirkap and providing the early monastic ideal of a relatively remote retirement from the world which was yet within easy begging distance of a prosperous and pious town.

Of these very numerous Buddhist religious sites the chief, and most readily accessible to the visitor, are those at Mohra Moradu, Pippala and Jaulian southeast of Sirsukh, and the shrines that grew up in the vicinity of the Dharmarajika Stupa, which was itself refaced at this time. Apart from their architectural interest, these sites are outstanding on account of their wealth of sculpture in clay and plaster belonging to a school

of artists whose output was enormous and frequently of the most dreary mediocrity, but which includes some very remarkable works of art. This Gandhara School (named after the ancient name for the region) is really a northern Kushan art-style complementary to the southern Mathura School of Muttra, and its outstanding characteristic is the dominating admixture of late Hellenistic conventions with native Indian styles. The proportions and precise details of the western contribution to Gandhara art are still debated (and in India unfortunately political animus has entered even into this abstract field of scholarship), though the use of classical architectural mouldings and such features as the acanthus and palmette and the treatment of drapery admit of no doubt about their origin, and it seems reasonably certain that the first representations of the Buddha as a human being owe their origin to the Apollo-Christ type imported into northern India from the west at this time. In looking at the sculpture at Taxila, *in situ* or in the museum, it is important to remember that it was originally coloured, and that a place like Jaulian must have been in its heyday as gaudily painted as are the equivalent shrines now in Tibet or Ceylon.

The Mohra Moradu site has a situation that would have endeared it to the lover of the 'wildly picturesque' in the last century, in a rocky gorge two hundred feet above the plain. Here is a large stupa adjacent to a monastery, consisting of a court surrounded by cells with walls still standing up to fifteen feet high and with evidence of an internal wooden verandah. There are considerable remains of plaster figure-reliefs and an elaborate stupa is standing in one cell with traces of original colour, while at the base of the stupa is a large series of fine high-relief groups. At Pippala, at the foot of the hills, are monastery buildings of two periods (first century and fourth and fifth centuries A.D.) with the usual plan of cells around a court, to be found again in later medieval monasteries at Sanchi, and, rock-cut, at Ajanta and Ellora.

It is at the Jaulian site however, on a hill-top 300 feet above the plain, that one sees the finest collection of late Gandhara stucco-work, most of it dating from the fifth century A.D. and probably set up only a short time before the monastery was sacked and burnt by the Huns (the burning incidentally contributing considerably to the preservation of much of the clay sculpture by baking it hard!). There is a fine monastery with a court surrounded by cells, behind which lie the kitchen, refectory and assembly hall, while at a lower level, and the first to be entered by the visitor, is a Stupa Court containing a main shrine and about twenty-five ancillary stupas with a wealth of figure sculpture. During the excavation of this monastery was found a fragmentary manuscript written on birch-bark, of fifth-century date and concerned with Buddhist ritual, and one of the earliest surviving manuscripts in India.

The Dharmarajika Stupa area was also in Kushan times a focus for architectural and artistic activity. A ring of small shrines was placed round the newly refaced Great Stupa, partly built over the Parthian work, and numerous small shrines and stupas were erected and ornamented with plaster figure-work. In one of these shrines was found an inscription on a sheet of silver to the honour of the Kushan king and recording that actual relics of the Buddha were deposited there. Eastwards of this area are the remains of a large monastery with successive rebuildings and alterations up to the fifth century.

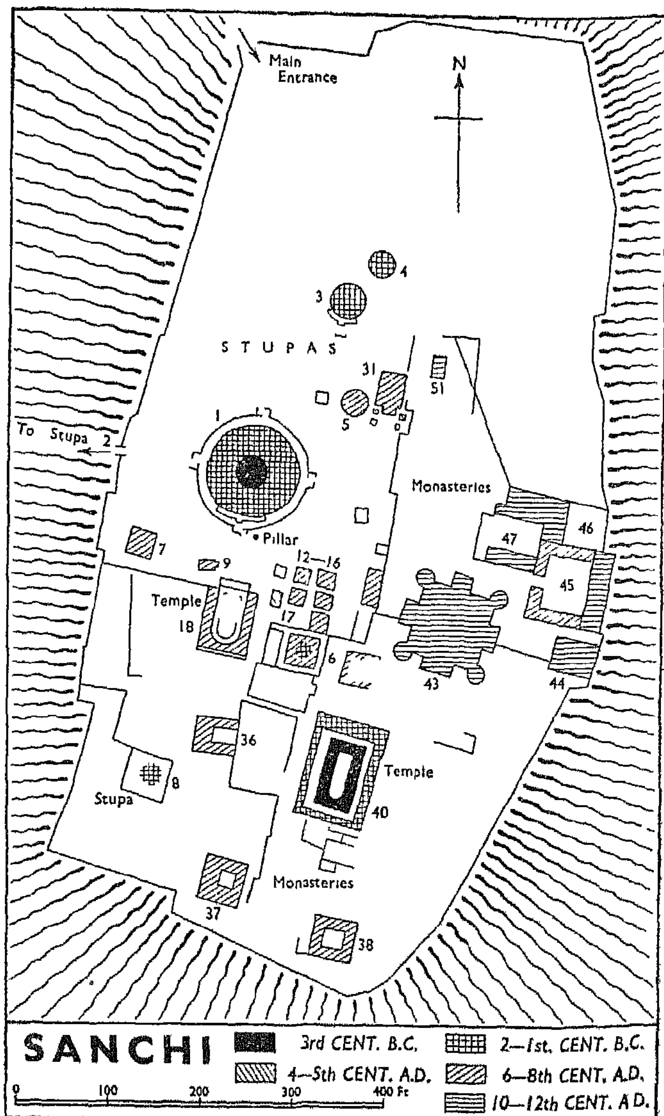
The end of Taxila came with the invasion of the Huns. By about A.D. 450 Attila in the west was, in Gibbon's phrase, 'able to send equal defiance to the courts of Ravenna and Constantinople' and fifty years later the White Huns had conquered eastwards to the Ganges valley. Most of the monasteries stood sacked, ruined and desolate when Hiuen Tsang, the Chinese pilgrim, visited Taxila in the seventh century, and the place had become a dependency of the kingdom of Kashmir. By then its founding as a great city of northern India was twelve hundred years in the past.

Chapter IV

SANCHI

It is a far cry from the Bronze Age of Europe to the Sunga period in Bhopal, and Stonehenge and the great stupa at Sanchi might seem remote enough from one another, yet these connexions are not so fantastic as might appear. Among the primitive peoples of Europe and Asia, from the Russian steppes to the Scottish moors, the custom of burying important individuals under circular cairns of stones or 'barrows' of earth was prevalent from at least 2000 B.C. onwards, from the mixed motives of commemorating the deceased, keeping his uneasy ghost safely within the grave, and ensuring that this was not violated and defiled. Towards this latter end, particularly where wild animals roved, or even where others more domestic might scent the corpse, a strong wooden post-and-rail fence round the mound might be built, as archaeologists have found was done from about 1800 B.C. in northern Europe. A tomb may easily become a shrine and a burial be replaced by a relic; and though what tombs the Aryans made when they entered India from the steppe-lands to the west is as conjectural as the song the Sirens sang, yet it cannot be only coincidence that the form taken by the earliest shrines known after the introduction of relic-worship into Buddhism in the India of the third century B.C. copy faithfully in permanent stone the features which in perishable wood have been detected by recent archaeological method in the prehistoric tombs of another area of Indo-European speech, far to the northwest.

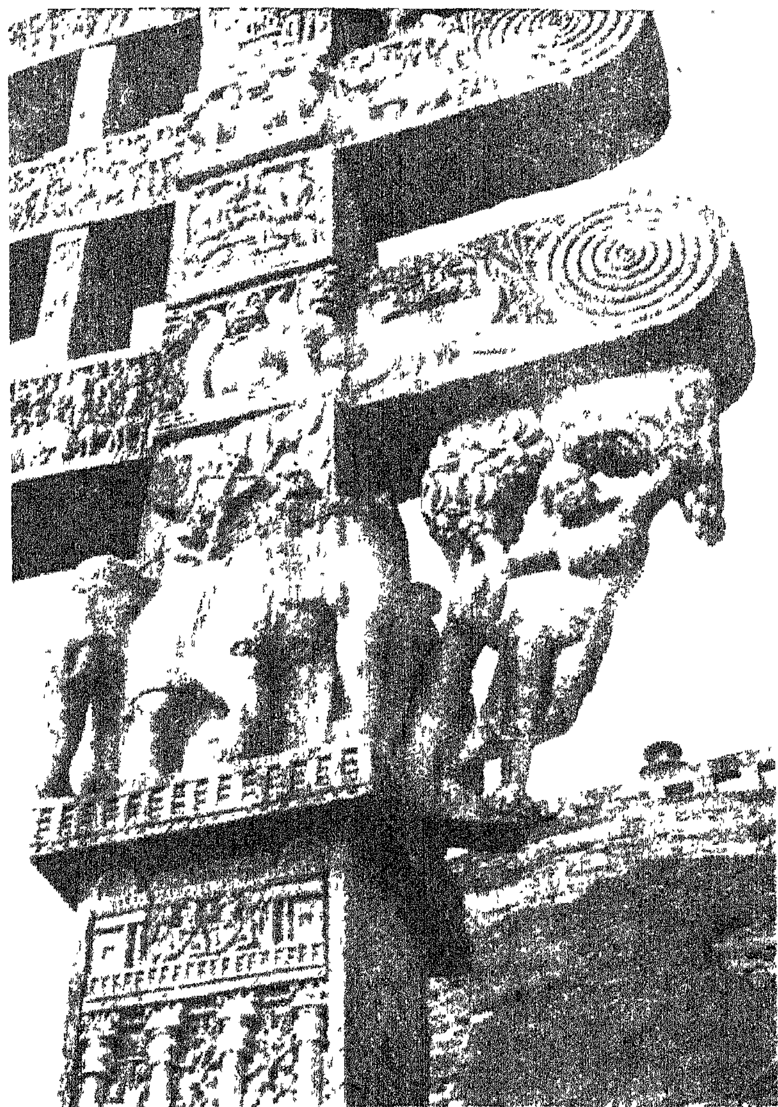
At Sanchi in Bhopal State exists the most remarkable group of such early Buddhist shrines, or stupas, extant in all India, their earliest elements belonging to about 250 B.C., though in their present form they date from a century or so later; and


Main Entrance
N
STUPAS
4
3
31
51
5
1
To Stupa 2
Monasteries
47
46
Pillar
7
9
12—16
45
Temple
18
17
6
43
44
36
Temple
8
Stupa
40
Monasteries
37
38
SANCHI
3rd CENT. B.C.
2—1st. CENT. B.C.
4—5th CENT. A.D.
6—8th CENT. A.D.
10—12th CENT. A.D.
0
100
200
300
400 Ft

round this primary group of shrines set on the little sandstone hog-backed hill, rising some 300 feet above the plain, other shrines, temples and monasteries were built from the beginning of the Gupta period in the fourth century A.D. on until the twelfth century at least. Today, thanks to the conservation work of the Archaeological Department from 1912–44, the Sanchi monuments form a site of outstanding interest, easily accessible from a main railway, which in addition to its archaeological interest presents a wealth of exquisite sculpture belonging to one of the earliest and most exciting of the early Indian schools. These stupas are an essential feature, in somewhat divergent forms, in all areas of the Buddhist religion—*dagobas* in Ceylon, *pagodas* in Burma and *chortens* in Tibet. All preserve the primary idea of a shrine around which processional and other forms of ceremonies of worship and prayer took place.

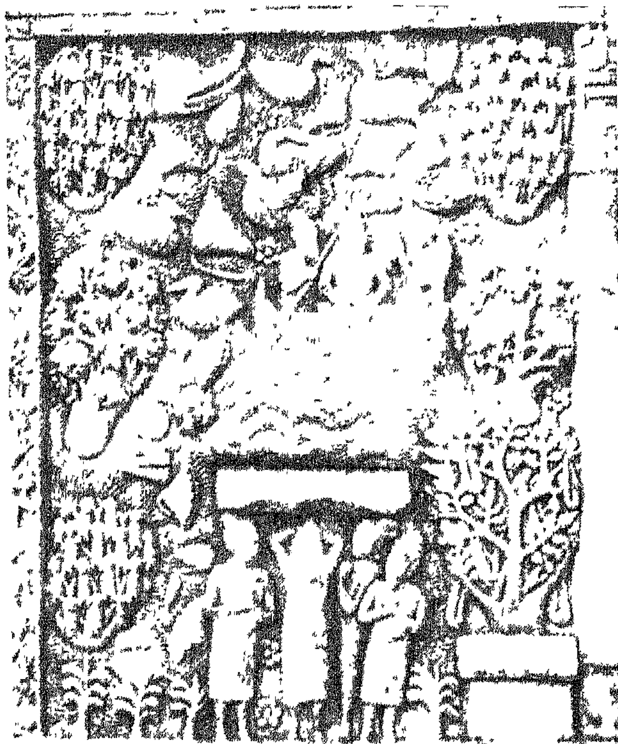
The main stupas on the site are three, of which Nos. 1 and 2 are of outstanding interest and No. 3 is much restored but has one carved gateway standing. These three all date within the second and first centuries B.C., and scattered over the western part of the site are a large number of smaller stupas of simple form, all much ruined and ranging in date down to the eighth century A.D. and in diameter down to a few feet. All would have been regarded as shrines, and in Stupas 2 (which lies away from the main group half-way down the hill on the west) and 3 were found relics in inscribed caskets attributing them to early Buddhist saints—two names are well-known as actual disciples of the Buddha, and others are associated with Asoka's Third Convocation.

The Great Stupa, No. 1, is architecturally an eccentric rather than a successful achievement but this does not detract from the fact that it is a most remarkable and interesting structure. Excavation has shown that the core of the monument is a small hemispherical brick stupa of Mauryan date, about 250 B.C., which was enlarged and cased in with the present structure about a century later, so that the basic tumulus element has become



Stuart Piggott

SANCHI: SCULPTURE ON EAST GATEWAY, GREAT STUPA. SECOND CENTURY B.C.



Stuart Piggott

SANCHI: PANEL OF SCULPTURE ON EAST GATEWAY OF GREAT STUPA SECOND CENTURY B.C.

a rubble cairn faced with dressed stone, 120 feet in diameter and 54 feet high and originally plastered. It has a rather awkward profile,[1] not truly hemispherical, and around its base is a raised platform served by two flights of steps on the south side. So far the construction is reasonable for stone building, but the platform and stairways have balusters and rails, and the whole monument is encircled on ground level by a balustrade, with gateways enclosing a processional path, all of which violate every principle of the stone-mason's craft by being, in all respects except their material, carpenters' work: post-and-rail fences with mortise-and-tenon joints and fantastic fretwork gateways, of which three out of the four have defied every architectural probability by standing for two thousand years rather than falling immediately after their first erection. On the top of the dome a further absurdity is a triple umbrella within a square fence, all rendered in stone. These features are common to Stupas 1, 2 and 3 except that No. 1 has four elaborately carved gates and No. 3 one, but these do not occur in No. 2. The workmanship is assured and competent to a degree, granted the extraordinary premiss of copying wood in stone, but behind the facade of sophisticated craftsmanship and a philosophical religion one suddenly catches the disconcerting glimpse of barbaric and primitive cults, the old king newly buried under his cairn, the medicine-men at their dances, and the rough-hewn timber fence white in the moonlight as the distant wolf pack howls.

> Oh keep the Dog far hence that's friend to men
> Or with his nails he'll dig it up again.

Such a translation of a circular, sacred wooden structure into stone is curiously enough very closely paralleled at Stonehenge, that great prehistoric monument of about 1500 B.C. in southern England, where the outer circle of uprights and lintels, of very

[1] But not so awkward as the domes of certain princes' palaces in New Delhi which are modelled on this unsuitable prototype! The Sanchi balustrades provided the model for the screen walls in front of the Secretariat buildings.

similar proportions to the balustrade of the Great Stupa, has also such carpentry features as mortises and tenons. In England the remains of the wooden prototypes have actually been found: in India they await the archaeologist's spade.

The balustrade uprights of Stupa 2, and the great gateways of Nos. 1 and 3, are carved with a profusion of ornament in relief which may utilize the conventions of the western vine-scroll or derived plant forms, may consist of formalized animals 'heraldically' treated or may present in lively, crowded detail pictures from the immense corpus of Buddhist legend. Many of these are Jataka scenes, which represent the adventures of the Buddha in his numberless previous incarnations, and others show incidents in the life of Gautama Buddha and his disciples: they are identified and described in detail in the official guide book, but even without knowledge of their meaning they are full of delights and fascinating details for the visitor—processions and battles and sieges; walled towns, ships, temples and holy trees; kings and warriors, fairies, dwarfs and snake-gods; elephants and chariots, lions, goats, camels, bulls, griffins and peacocks—all crowding and jostling the triple lintels of the doorways with the everyday life and thought of the first century B.C. in central India. An interesting point to notice is that at the stage of Buddhist iconography represented at Sanchi the Buddha is never directly represented but symbolized by a tree, a throne, a pair of foot-prints, etc. Actual representation of the Buddha in human form dates from the early centuries A.D. There are most interesting links with the west—the vine-scroll already mentioned, and details of architecture such as pillar capitals with kneeling beasts back to back that must derive from the Persia of the Achaemenid kings in the sixth century B.C. These appear at Sanchi much as the architectural and sculptural forms of classical Rome were utilized centuries later in Gaul and Britain by the builders of the Romanesque churches, and emphasize that the inspiration of the Maurya and Sunga empire was that of Cyrus and Darius.

The carving of these gateways was of course split up among a large number of craftsmen, some in guilds such as the ivory carvers of Vidisa (modern Bhilsa) who are recorded in an inscription to have worked on the south gateway of the Great Stupa, and often several individuals must have worked on a lintel or even on a single large scene. For those visitors with an eye for style the detection of individual workmanship will form one of the charms of Sanchi—note for instance how two sculptors have tackled the same problem, a pair of addorsed camels, on the inner face of the middle lintel of the East Gate, and how far more satisfactory is the strongly formalized treatment of that on the right. On the same gateway the brilliant low-relief treatment of the scene of Buddha walking on the waters (left pillar front face) is interesting to contrast with the deeper carving and undercutting normal elsewhere. The lion capitals of the South Gate should be compared with those of the Asoka pillar of two hundred years before now in the Museum at Sanchi. They lack the sophisticated competence of the earlier work; but I cannot share Sir John Marshall's scorn for the later beasts because they are not Mauryan in style (which they had no reason to be) and because they have five claws (which is quite irrelevant).

A final point about the sculpture is that it is very clearly the work of a school of secular craftsmen who were as likely to be employed to ornament a prince's seraglio as a princely shrine. We see this again in the Ajanta mural paintings: confusion seems to arise in people's minds today owing to the constantly increasing specialization especially in western art, but in simple societies the craftsman is at the service of all, building or painting or carving according to his skill wherever employment offers. The self-conscious artist is a recent psychological evolution and we need not seek him among the sculptors of Sanchi, carving away to the best of their ability in a style which, with minor individual variation, was to them simply the traditional, the only way of sculptural representation.

The only other important structure on the site, of a date contemporary with the stupas, is Temple 40, southeast of the Great Stupa. There is little to see for the visitor today, but excavation revealed that on this site originally stood a timber apsidal-ended hall of Mauryan date, a little later reconstructed in stone: a chaitya hall of the type so well known from later rock-cut examples at Ellora, Ajanta and elsewhere. After this is a gap in the architectural record at Sanchi until the fourth century A.D., when Temple 17 near the Great Stupa was built under the Gupta dynasty, an exquisite little work with a classical harmony of proportion. By its side is another chaitya hall (Temple 18), striking even in ruin with its slender square pillars nearly 20 feet high, dating from about A.D. 650 and originally consisting of a pillared nave and an apsidal sanctuary with solid walls originally containing a stupa. To this period, about the seventh century A.D., belong a group of stupas on square bases (7, 12–16), some monastery buildings to the south (36–8), and a small temple near Stupa 5 (Temple 31).

The latest building period on the site is represented by a group of structures on the higher ground to the east. The large square foundation with angle towers (No. 43) is problematical in purpose, buildings 45–8 are monasteries with their shrines, and all date from round about the tenth to the twelfth centuries A.D., although No. 45 is partly of seventh- or eighth-century date. Considerable remains exist of the shrine of No. 45, with a broken shikara roof and an image of Buddha inside. There is some interesting carving at the doorway (some re-used from earlier buildings) with very engaging lions on the threshold itself. Another monastery of this late period has recently been excavated on the hill slope to the west, by the path leading to Stupa 2.

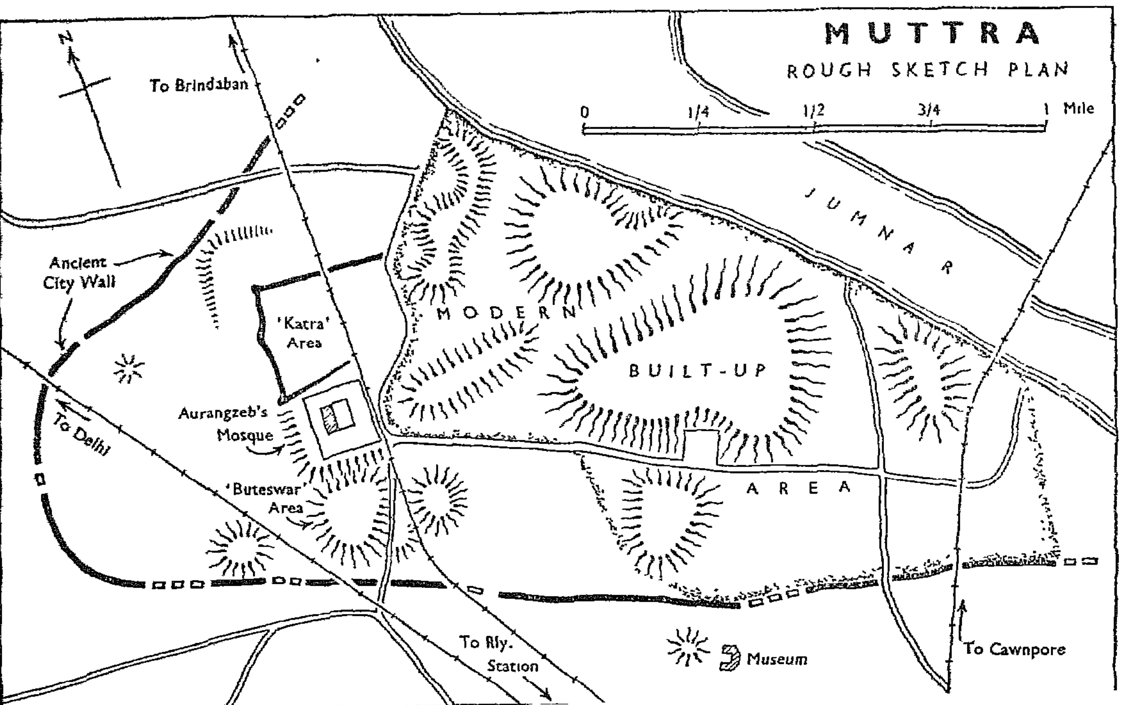
There is a museum on the site containing sculptural fragments and also 'finds' of iron tools, pottery fragments, etc., discovered during the excavation. The fragments of bowls of hard fine pottery with a brilliant, almost metallic, black polished surface

are worth noticing. This characteristic pottery is of third- or fourth-century B.C. date and is found ubiquitously on sites of this date in north and central India, its presence giving an interesting archaeological confirmation of the unity of the Mauryan Empire over large areas, in the same way as the similarly stereotyped red 'Samian' ware is found over the whole extent of the Roman Empire, even occurring in south India.

Chapter V

MUTTRA

ALTHOUGH Muttra (spelt until recently Mathura) is one of the great traditional shrines of Hinduism, associated with the childhood of Krishna, and stands on the banks of the Jumna—'the holy land of the pilgrim, the sacred Jordan of his fancy, on whose banks he may sit and weep, as did the banished Israelite of old, for the glories of Mathura, his Jerusalem'—yet there is comparatively little to be seen today of the remains of a city founded at least in Mauryan times and one which was practically the southern capital of the Kushan kingdom in the first two centuries A.D. But it is easily accessible from Delhi and its monuments, if not obvious, offer a fascinating and almost untouched field for the amateur in field archaeology, while the Curzon Museum of Archaeology houses a collection of ancient sculpture recovered from adjacent sites which is outstanding in the whole of India. The visitor must expect no buildings still standing, even in ruin, as a testimony of Muttra's former greatness—a comparatively modern town with a Mogul building or two huddles against the river, built on the irregular mounds of the debris of earlier cities which continue outside the built-up area in further hillocks of stones and earth and among which may be traced the ancient town walls. From these mounds


MUTTRA
ROUGH SKETCH PLAN
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1/4
1/2
3/4
1 Mile
N
To Brindaban
Ancient City Wall
'Katra' Area
Aurangzeb's Mosque
To Delhi
'Buteswar' Area
MODERN
BUILT-UP
AREA
JUMNA R
To Rly. Station
Museum
To Cawnpore

sculptures and inscriptions have been dug out in an appallingly unscientific fashion since the 1850's: the potsherds which litter the ravaged mounds today give a foretaste of what skilful excavation might reveal, and even without this give hints to the archaeologist. With my friends T. G. E. Powell and P. W. Murray Threipland I was able to do some field work at Muttra in 1943–4, some of the results of which are incorporated in this chapter.

The earlier phases of Muttra's history can be deduced from two sources, archaeology and art-history. When examining the site we made a search for the evidence of the earliest Muttra by examining the railway cutting through which runs the branch line to Brindaban, since it was apparent that this had cut clean through a large mound of accumulated settlements called the Katra site, right down to the original natural ground level. From the bottom of this cutting, and from the material thrown up on either side (at the top, therefore the latest dug out, therefore from the lowest level) we found scraps of burnished black *ware known from so many Indian sites in contexts implying* the third and fourth centuries B.C., and not only these, but even more interesting sherds of fine thin grey ware with ornament painted on in black, exactly similar to pots which had been found for the first time only a few weeks earlier in the Archaeological Department's excavations at an ancient city site, Ahichchattra near Bareilly, and there probably second-century B.C. at least. Here then was archaeological evidence of a settlement at Muttra in the time of the Maurya and Sunga dynasties, and this fitted in with a find made in the last century in the Arjunpura Mohalla of the city where buildings of bricks of sizes characteristic of Mauryan constructions, and a stone architectural fragment inscribed in the Brahmi script of the same period, were found. Stylistically the earliest sculpture from the region, the colossi from Parkham and Baroda villages, are from outside the main area of concentration of sites in Muttra itself. These striking specimens of archaic art are in

the Museum, which also contains numerous fragments from gateways and railings of stupas in the Sunga sculptural mode as at Sanchi. The terracotta figurines also in the Museum are there confidently labelled as 'pre-Mauryan', 'Mauryan' and so forth, but this classification should be treated with the utmost reserve as it is based on a purely hypothetical typological sequence unchecked by the evidence from scientific excavation. Many probably do however belong to the first two centuries B.C. and show interesting details of hair-dressing and ornament.

During the first century B.C. there is evidence from locally discovered inscriptions that Muttra was under the administration of rulers bearing the Persian title of 'satraps' who had established themselves in northwestern India after the invasions of the Sakas. Coming originally from the regions beyond Tashkent, now Kazak S.S.R., the Sakas had invaded Bactria and India and set up centres of rule at Taxila and Muttra almost certainly dependent on the powerful Arsacid dynasty of Parthia. One inscription records the dedication of a Krishna temple and another a Buddhist stupa and monastery, and in both the name of the satrap Sodasa appears.

This recognition of Muttra as the southern of a pair of governing centres in the northwest by the first century B.C. is rather important in the light of subsequent history. Geographically, the city occupies an important borderline position between the plains of the Punjab and the beginnings of central India; a position which can be appreciated even today. 'It is only on reaching Muttra,' writes a percipient French historian, 'on its waterfront with the Jumna and its sacred turtles, or in its monkey-haunted temples, that you begin to breathe the true air of Hindostan', and the establishment of the Saka satraps here may have acted as a precedent and influenced the choice of the site as a centre of rule in the first two centuries A.D. when, under another dynasty of invaders from the steppes, the Kushans, Muttra reached the heyday of its ancient prosperity.

The Kushan kings are among the most interesting figures

of early Indian history. They are represented in the archaeological record by a considerable number of inscriptions, a large series of coins often of excellent workmanship and frequently carrying well-characterized portraits of the individuals issuing them; a body of legends centring on one of the kings in Buddhist tradition and finally by some remarkable portrait-statues, as such almost unique in Indian art, which were found near Muttra and are one of the outstanding features of the Museum there. Like the Sakas, the Kushans came from the steppe country: the Yuë-chih tribes ancestral to the dynasty are first heard of in western China and Sinkiang as a nomad people moving westwards over the Tien Shan and evicting the Sakas from their territory in the second century B.C., and later settling by the Oxus in what is now Uzbek S.S.R., where they seem to have formed a settled and more or less unified nation by early in the first century A.D. The first historical Kushan king who formed this confederation of tribes is Kadphises I, and by the end of his reign he had consolidated an empire eastwards to the borders of Afghanistan and India—an empire which his two immediate successors, Kadphises II and Kanishka, extended to include the provinces of Kashgar, Yarkand and Khotan on the western edge of China, Kashmir, and northwest India as far south as the Vindhya Hills. The detailed dating of these kings within the dynasty is debated, but the final expansion of the Kushan empire must have been effected by about A.D. 150.

Kanishka's capital was established at Peshawar, but that Muttra must have played an important place in the government of the Kushans is shown by its selection as the site for a royal gallery of sculptures representing members of the ruling family. This was discovered at the village of Mat, outside Muttra, some forty-five years ago in a typically unsatisfactory excavation: remains of buildings including a stupa were found on a plinth 100 by 60 feet, and three statues were recovered together with an inscription which recorded the building of a garden, a well, a 'tank' and a *devakula*—the last word may mean a temple or

a hall or royal effigies. The sculptures are now in the Curzon Museum—all headless but nevertheless of outstanding historical and artistic interest. They are inscribed with the names and titles of the persons they represent: there seems good reason to believe, as my friend Major J. A. B. Palmer points out to me, that these inscriptions, squeezed in or cut across the drapery of the figures instead of on the more appropriate plinths, are later than the original setting up of the statues. The seated statue on a lion-throne, wearing an embroidered tunic and heavy boots, is inscribed *Vima Takshama* (Vema the strong) and must be Kadphises II, the *Ooemo Kadphises* of the legend in Greek characters on the coins that, minted in great numbers, remained current in the northwest until the last century. Another statue shows a standing figure in a tunic and trousers bearing the name of Shastana, presumably the Chashtana (Tiastanes of Greek writers) who founded the Saka dynasty of Ujjain (Ozene) in western India and whose statue in the Kushan *devakula* suggests kinship with that house.

But the outstanding statue, worth a visit to Muttra for itself alone, is that of the great Kanishka. Life-size, standing uncompromisingly and squarely, in enormous padded boots of the type still known in Gilgit and wearing a stiff full-skirted coat over a tunic, one hand on his sword and the other on a giant ceremonial mace, 'The Great King, King of Kings, His Majesty Kanishka' is, even in its mutilated headless state, one of the most impressive embodiments of the conqueror from the steppes that could be imagined. Working in a severely archaic frontal style, the sculptor has nevertheless contrived to express the character of the king in every part of his body, stance and dress—if ever a man's soul was portrayed even in his boots, it is in this astonishing statue. The portraits on the coins show the Kushan kings with large strong noses and suggest Iranian or western stock, though it is doubtful whether these statues had individualized heads: if they did, I feel that in making an imaginary reconstruction of the Kanishka statue the head of

Josef Stalin would not look at all out of character with the rest of the figure. The costume, singularly inappropriate for the hot climate of Muttra, probably represents the official regal robes of the Kushans, having historical and traditional associations with the original home of the dynasty.

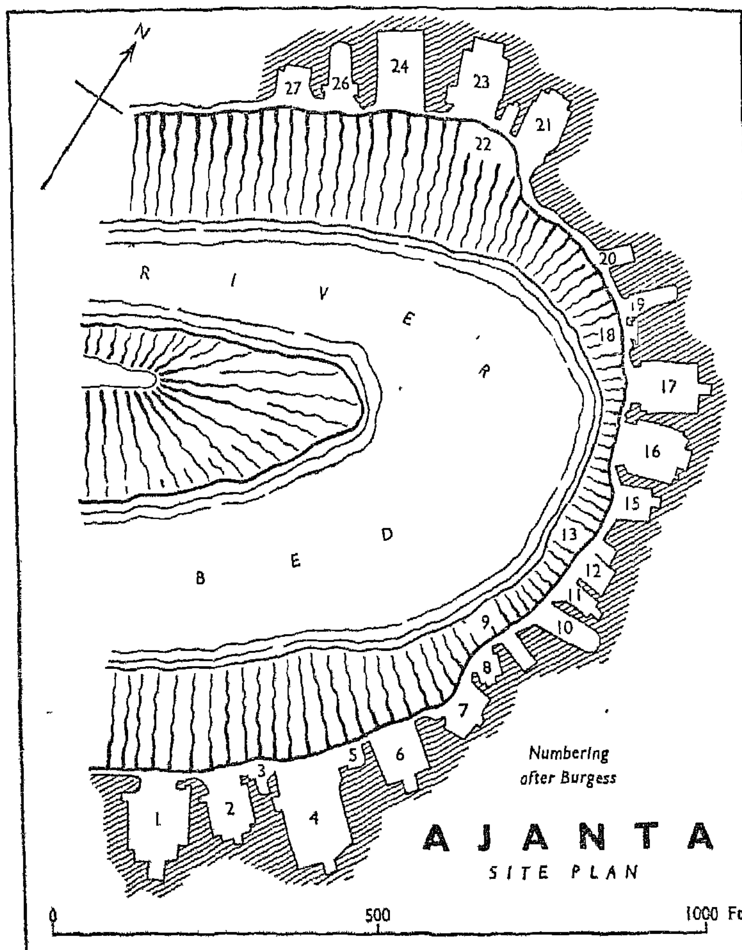
Apart from these statues there is a mass of decorative and figure sculpture belonging to the first two centuries A.D. in the Museum and constituting what is usually referred to as the 'Mathura School': it is noteworthy that although the Kushans are often claimed as the great supporters of Buddhism the sculpture shows a very large proportion of motifs associated with snake-worship, Hinduism and Jainism. Some sculptures have inscriptions which mention Kushan kings and many show the beginnings of that preoccupation with what Cunningham delightfully called 'the smirking unabashed nudities' of voluptuous girls, so essential and tiresome a feature of later Indian art. From a site at Jamalpur, just south of Muttra, came three inscriptions of Kanishka and one of Huvishka, a later Kushan king—there was a great monastery here dedicated to him which included a pillared hall of at least fifty columns; other Kushan inscriptions were found at Kankali and in the Katra site beneath the mosque. I think it probable that it is to the Kushan period that we should attribute the great city walls that enclose an elongated horseshoe-shaped area based on the right bank of the Jumna: such archaeological evidence as can be gleaned from potsherds, etc., is not inconsistent with such a date or even one a little earlier (in Saka times), and the importance of the city at this time makes such fortifications historically probable. Today the walls are a string of irregular mounds of clay and earth, but it is possible to see in sections cut through them that they originally consisted of a mud-brick wall probably twenty feet thick and fifty or more feet high backed by a substantial earthen rampart. The square Katra area is enclosed with similar walls, with indications of towers at the angles, and may have constituted a citadel within the main city walls.

There is one more point with regard to the Kushans at Muttra that has not I believe been made before. When in the seventh century A.D. it was visited by the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang (who under the name of Tripitaka appears in the charming Buddhist fairy-tale recently translated by Arthur Waley as *Monkey*), he noted in his journal that he saw 'a stone house about 20 feet high and 30 feet wide. It is filled with small wooden tokens (or slips) four inches long'; and he goes on to tell a tale of their legendary use as records of Buddhist conversions. Now this sounds extremely odd, yet not the sort of story that one invents, and I think it may have a very interesting explanation. Sir Aurel Stein's famous excavations in the sand-buried ancient sites in the Taklamakan Desert revealed the fact that from at least the first century B.C. to the third century A.D. documents in that region were normally written on slips or tablets of wood, in Chinese or Kharosthi script. Here is the ancestral area of the Yuë-chih and the Kushans—some wooden documents of mid third-century A.D. from Niya in Khotan are actual frontier permits for Yuë-chih people—and it seems reasonable to suppose that the Kushans when they came to India may have brought with them the custom of keeping records on slips of wood, especially in regions like Muttra where birch-bark or palm-leaf did not offer themselves as convenient substitutes. Was the Kushan record-office still preserved at Muttra in the time of Hiuen Tsang to whom, ignorant of Kharosthi and accustomed to paper as a writing material of centuries' standing it was just a puzzling feature in a strange land?[1]

After the Kushans, if the glories of Muttra were somewhat diminished, it still remained a substantial place of sanctity and consequence. Inscriptions and sculptures of the Gupta period (from the early fourth century A.D.) have been found, especially on the Katra site where there was a large monastery dedicated

[1] It is only fair to add that my friend Dr Chakravati, Government of India Epigraphist, does not agree with these conclusions, but I put them forward as at all events an interesting possibility.

at this time, and the Chinese pilgrim Fa Hien, visiting Muttra about A.D. 400, found 'the law of Buddha progressing and flourishing' in twenty monasteries, which were still prosperous two hundred years later when Hiuen Tsang paid his visit during the reign of the Hun king Harsha. He notes that the city was four miles round — this is the approximate circuit of the ancient walls which I have mentioned above— and describes lovingly the ceremonies at the famous stupas, ten of which at least he names separately. On feast days, he says, 'they honour the stupas with offerings. They spread out their jewelled banners; the precious umbrellas are crowded together like network, the smoke of incense rises in clouds and flowers are scattered in every direction like rain— the sun and moon are concealed as by clouds. . . . The king *of the country and the great ministers apply themselves to these* religious duties with zeal'. He also records that he saw five Hindu temples, one of which was probably that in the Katra site which remained until the seventeenth century, when Aurangzeb destroyed it and put a singularly uninteresting mosque in its place. The Hindu faith suffered less destruction of its temples at Brindaban, eight miles to the north of Muttra, where some very remarkable temples were constructed during the period of religious tolerance under Akbar and show a most curious combination of Hindu and Islamic motifs.



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Chapter VI

AJANTA

IN 1910 Sir George Birdwood, in a bluff no-nonsense talk to the Royal Society of Arts, gave it as his opinion in respect of a sculptured Buddha that 'a boiled suet pudding would serve equally well as a symbol of passionate purity and serenity of soul', perhaps recalling that another titled critic, Sir George Watt, had deprecatingly said shortly before that certain Buddhist paintings in India 'can hardly be classed among the Fine Arts'. Of these same paintings Laurence Binyon was to write, some twenty-five years later, that they have for Asia 'the same outstanding significance that the frescoes of Assisi, Siena and Florence have for Europe'—the paintings in question being those of Ajanta, now probably the most outstanding and internationally famous monument of Indian art. The revolution in the appreciation of oriental art by Europeans implied in these quotations is in very large measure due to the recognition of the Ajanta paintings through copies published in England from 1896 onwards, the most satisfactory presentations for study being the superb and accurate direct colour photographs still in the process of publication by the Archaeological Department of Hyderabad State. It is all the more regrettable that probably more lamentable foolishness has been written about these paintings than about any comparable group of murals, ranging from esoteric heights of what Eric Gill called 'art-nonsense' to the mawkish depths of vapid sentimentality, while their effect on contemporary Indian art is about as detrimental and deadening as was that of the Gothic Revival on nineteenth-century English architecture.

The paintings at Ajanta consist of the considerable remains of a series of wall and ceiling ornament to a group of rock-cut

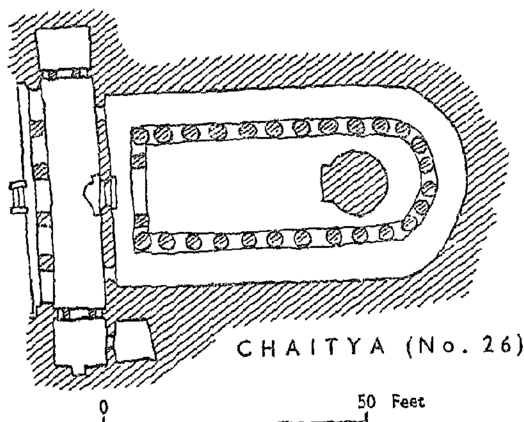
shrines of the Buddhist faith, architecturally remarkable in themselves and cut in a beautiful and remote river gorge in the Deccan. The shrines range in date from about the second century B.C. to the middle of the seventh century A.D.; the paintings, with the exception of a few dating from mid first-century B.C., are almost entirely of the early seventh century A.D., mainly probably around 620 to 640. They include elaborate figure compositions which may contain life-size human forms and, especially on the ceilings, a wealth of floral and other conventional decorative motifs. Time, damp, decay, the fires of peasants and the ill-advised use of varnish to preserve them in the last century have contributed to their mutilation, but enough remains to justify Laurence Binyon's estimation of their importance. They are, undoubtedly, major works of art.

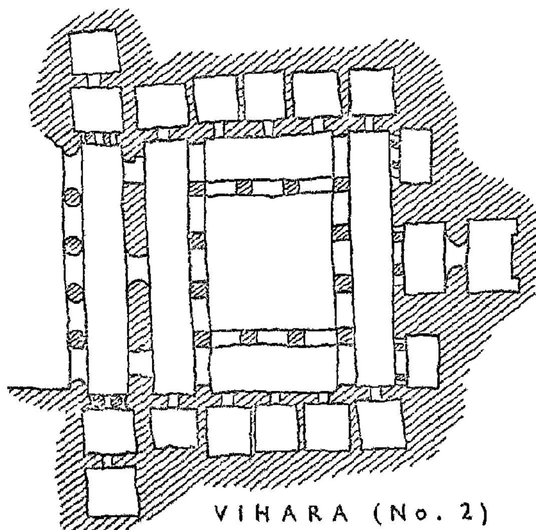
Before describing the paintings themselves it will however be convenient to consider the structures they decorate and the circumstances under which they were designed. Historically, the earliest group of 'caves' (Nos. 8–13) were cut at a time when the Deccan was under the rule of the later Andhra dynasty of western India, but the main group, flanking the early structures on both sides, and the great main series of paintings, are the products of what looks like direct or indirect patronage under the kings of the western Chalukyan dynasty (c. 550–642). Ajanta is one of a number of centres of Buddhist monasticism in western India, where the original idea of a single hermit living in a natural cave in solitude was developed into the settlement of a whole colony of monks, dwelling and worshipping in magnificent rock-hewn structures which reproduced, underground and in solid stone, the features of the monasteries, shrines and assembly halls previously (and of course contemporaneously as well) built in wood above ground in the normal manner. The river gorge at Ajanta, with its almost sheer rock sides at an impressive horseshoe bend in the stream, was a very suitable spot to build such a series of structures, and the first group of six caves were cut out somewher

in the late second and first centuries B.C. in the centre of the curve, and subsequent caves were excavated on both sides until the middle of the seventh century A.D., so that, as the caves are numbered today from east to west round the crescent, the visitor starts his tour with No. 1, actually one of the latest.

The rock-cut structures fall into two classes—*chaityas* or halls of worship and *viharas* or monasteries, having a central court, cells for monks, and a shrine. At Ajanta there are four chaityas, two in the early group, Nos. 9 and 10, both c. 150–100 B.C., and two in the further (western) part of the later caves, Nos. 19 (probably sixth century A.D.) and 26 (early seventh century A.D.). All share the common features of being long-aisled structures with colonnades forming an apse round a stupa which, in the later chaityas, belonging to the Mahayana sect of Buddhism, is fronted by an image of the Buddha. Details of wood prototypes are faithfully represented in ceiling ribs and above all in the entrance facades. These include a great window set in a horseshoe arch the equivalent of which, constructed of wood and matting, can be seen in the arched coverings of the local carts today. Chaitya No. 10 had indeed originally an actual wooden facade, now vanished, though traces of its attachment and brick foundation are still visible.

The viharas form the remaining twenty-five rock-cut structures at Ajanta, four belonging to the early group. Here the details of plan vary more than in the chaityas but the essentials of a square central court, with a verandah and, in the later examples, pillars within the court, and with surrounding cells and a shrine at the rear, are found throughout. The earliest vihara (No. 12) has no shrine and twelve cells: in the later examples up to twenty cells are found—if all available accommodation was utilized Ajanta could, by about A.D. 640, have housed a community of 300 or more monks. The Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang, though he came to the capital of Pulakesin II in about 640 and heard of Ajanta and its paintings, did not actually visit the place. There are a number of un-





AJANTA TYPES OF BUDDHIST ROCK-CUT SHRINES 7th CENT. A.D.

finished excavations (e.g. Nos. 3, 5, 14, 23, 24 and 27–9) and in these, presumably abandoned at the end of the Chalukyan dynasty in 642, the constructional methods by which the viharas were cut out from the rock can be followed in a most interesting manner, No. 24 being particularly instructive in this respect.

In the carving of the facades and verandahs, as well as the sculpture of the Buddhas and Boddhisatvas in the shrines, Ajanta shows an excellence which would make the site noteworthy even without the paintings, but these so dominate the place that the sculpture tends to be forgotten. It is impossible here to do more than indicate a few points that may help the visitor to understand and appreciate the paintings to a fuller degree after the first impression of vague confused splendour has passed, and give him some surer basis for discussion than that afforded by an uncritical acceptance of the whole series as impeccable. It is, I think, important to remember from the outset a difference between Buddhist and Hindu art which goes back to the fundamentals of the two religions. Buddhism has an historical founder, many details of whose earthly life were recorded (and many more invented) by his subsequent disciples, and added to this the doctrine of reincarnation produced the theory of a large number of previous existences on this earth of the Enlightened One in different animal or human forms, which are recorded in the Jataka stories. The potential iconography of Buddhism therefore has an almost infinite number of scenes to depict, in which the parts are played by kings and beggars, deer and elephants, in palaces or monasteries, on the sea or in the forests: in a word, despite the Buddhist insistence on the illusory nature of the visible universe, it was just this everyday familiar world that provided its edifying pictorial sermons. The parallel with Christianity is obvious, no less than the antithesis to Hinduism, where everyone is a god, even the heroes of the mythical epics, and the artist's task was to render in visual simplicity complex theolo-

gical conceptions that had never existed outside the dark imaginings of the Brahmins. At Ajanta therefore, as earlier at Sanchi, it is the scenes from contemporary life that form the subject-matter. They clearly delighted and stimulated the artist as much as they do the beholder today, and this immediately leads to another and most interesting point, already touched on with reference to the sculptors of Sanchi.

What was the status, the background of the Ajanta painters? That they were Buddhists is obvious; that they were members of the local monastic community in the strict sense is far less certain. The innumerable scenes of court life, the battles and shipwrecks, the close acquaintance with the homes and manners of the nobles and not least the ladies with their richly jewelled parures and alluring graces—these things are not learnt nor imagined by ascetics in a lonely monastery. They are part of the experience of sophisticated artists who would paint an equally admirable series of murals in the palace of Pulakesin representing the triumphs of the Chalukyan kings, or in the vihara of a rich monastery depicting the abnegation of the Founder of the Faith. The palace has vanished: the rock-cut vihara has survived.

The extant remains of painting are today confined to a dozen caves, and of these only half are reasonably preserved or in any way complete. Nos. 9 and 10 (the two chaityas) of the early group have paintings, and Nos. 1 and 2, 16 and 17 of the later group contain the main glories of the seventh-century art. The paintings on the walls of Chaitya 9 are dated by the epigraphic evidence of the accompanying fragmentary inscriptions to c. 50 B.C., and on the aisle ceilings are conventional roundels and 'grained' wood beams painted on in seventh-century technique, and similar roof painting occurs in No. 10. Here again there are early wall paintings of the same date as those in No. 9, while on the pillars are striking figures of Boddhisatvas which in their pose and details of drapery recall the semi-Hellenistic Gandhara tradition of northwest India and are probably third- or fourth-century A.D.

It is with cave No. 1, the first to be reached by the visitor, that the main aesthetic excitements of Ajanta begin. This is a large vihara of which originally the entire wall surface within the court and shrine was covered with paintings of large and complex figure subjects, while the roof too was painted in naturalistic and conventional patterns in imitation of a wooden original—a reasonable division of subject-matter to be seen today (with actual wooden roofs) in the viharas of the still active Buddhist community of Ceylon. The pictorial scenes are mainly Jataka stories—legends of the former existences of the Buddha—but no knowledge of these is necessary to appreciate and enjoy the paintings as pure pieces of art. To our eyes the lack of coherent design is sometimes confusing, and without a formal composition of masses the attention wanders as irresponsibly as the painting over the wall surface, but a certain unity of conception is to be seen bringing together the main scenes. Outstanding and justly famous is the great Boddhisatva with the lotus (Padmapani) on the left of the entrance to the shrine: a figure of subtle and haunting beauty. On the left wall of the main court is a fine composition showing the departure of the Buddha from his father's court which is an excellent example of the painter's intimate knowledge of court life and processions. Here and in similar scenes at Ajanta we see that same tropical magnificence of the ancient oriental courts which was captured in verse by the medieval Sinhalese poet:

With fanning breath of soft yak-tail fly-whisks
In accord with colour of blue lotus wreaths
And glowing waves of bright ornament-cluster
With ministers and retinue that king set out . . .

Where bloomed lily faces of city women
Strewing puffed-rice flowers, he saw with pleasure . . .
The women who look with desire on him
From the corners of broad long eyes, he saw.[1]

[1] From the *Guttila* (fifteenth century). Translated by George Keyt.

In addition to these Jataka scenes Cave 1 also contains, on the court wall on the left-hand side of the entrance, a scene which is of first-class importance in dating the paintings. Although its significance has been disputed there seems little doubt that it represents an historical event, known from documentary sources—the reception of the Persian embassy from the Sassanian king Chosroes II at the court of Pulakesin II in A.D. 625–30. The envoys wear characteristic helmets and their full clothing contrasts with the slightly clad Indians, and this is *not* the *only* representation of these people in the vihara, for the artists who painted the ceiling were so intrigued by these odd-looking strangers that they utilized them again and again. In the larger square panels they occur in groups with a central figure drinking from a bowl: their costume is shown in the customary detail, including the two fluttering striped ribbons at the back of the neck—a curious feature known as a Sassanian court fashion from representations in Persia of this date, and so amusing to the Indian artist that he paints it wherever he can on people talking and drinking on his ceiling. This can surely only mean that the artists had actually been at Pulakesin's court and seen the Persian envoys, and that the vihara was painted soon after.

Vihara No. 2 contains paintings similar to those in No. 1, and here and elsewhere is seen a very odd convention, in the form of a semi-architectural construction, half like a ruined building and half like rocks, which is painted as a frame to important individuals or scenes. This 'box of bricks' convention is drawn with an attempt at illusory solidity obtained by a sort of rough perspective, elsewhere in the paintings ignored as a technique with a resultant gain in aesthetic effect. In Vihara No. 2 this framing, which is curiously reminiscent of the convention of a ruined building behind primitive European Nativity scenes, is used with some success in forming two groups which make up deliberately balanced compositions, on the left and right walls of the cell to the right of the main shrine. The

broken arch in the right-hand scene is especially odd and interesting, and both have central 'windows' with splayed openings. On the right-hand wall of the main court of this vihara is a sea-piece, with a ship on a splendidly conventionalized pattern of waves, and the ceiling is again painted in the manner of No. 1 but of course without the Sassanian figures. The ceiling artists seem to have been working in a tradition very different from those employed on the walls, and use a great number of plant motifs which bear a resemblance, in colour and form, to the less successful efforts of the Art Nouveau movement of the nineties in Europe.

Vihara 16 has unfortunately a relatively small number of paintings surviving, but these include household scenes with intriguing detail such as bird-cages and pigeon-lofts as well as interesting architectural features such as the circular pillared pavilion in a scene on the right-hand wall of the court.

Vihara 17 carries on the great tradition, with considerable remains of paintings in the verandah, where they can be seen in daylight instead of the beam of the portable electric light used in the interiors. There are some exquisite flying figures and fragments of a Wheel of Existence—a symbolical composition still much painted by Buddhist artists in Tibet. Inside is a fine Enthronement of the Buddha on the left of the shrine, with recognizable Sassanians among the surrounding crowds, fluttering ribbons well in evidence, suggesting a date near that of the Vihara 1 paintings. A battle scene includes some superb horses in crowded masses and bold foreshortening, and here as elsewhere the exquisite drawing of deer and other wild animals is very noticeable. On the antechamber wall on the left of the shrine is a most moving and impressive composition of the Buddha before a mother and child—unaccountably, in the published reproductions, the mysterious towering figure of the Buddha is omitted and only the mother and child shown, which in isolation become devoid of significance and slightly sentimental.

In the foregoing notes I have deliberately said little or nothing of the colour or general effect of the paintings as one sees them on the irregular areas of plaster that still remain on the grey rock walls: that is for the visitor himself to see and experience. It may be said in passing that all the published reproductions except the recent colour photographs are in various ways misleading and convey little of the extraordinary power of the originals.

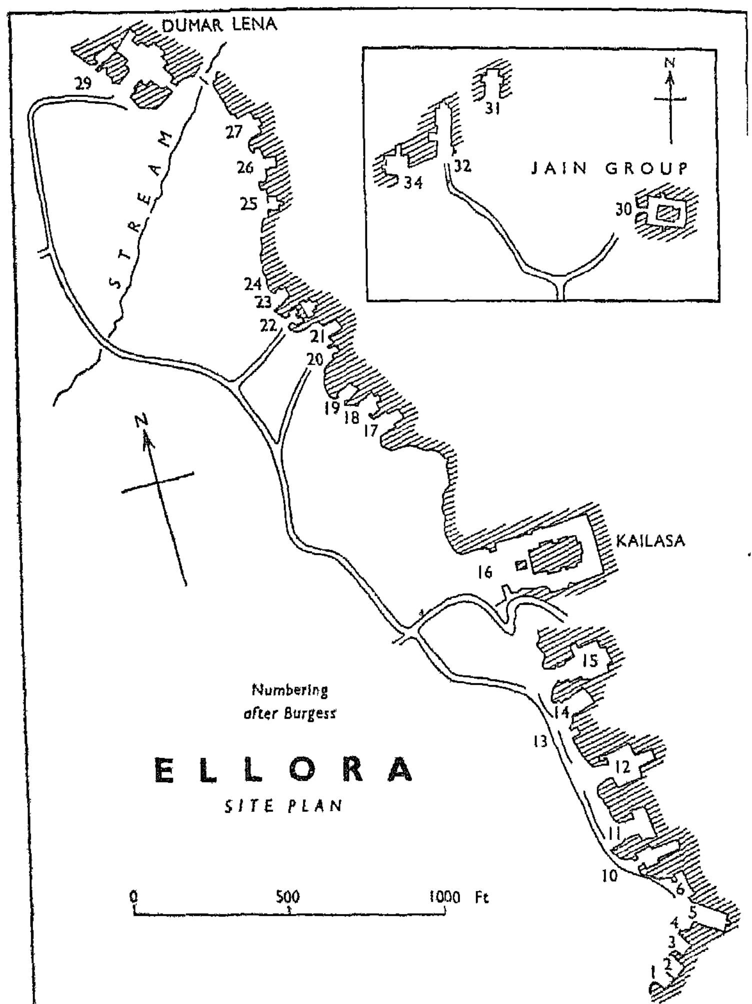
Chapter VII

ELLORA

One of the most curious and recurrent features of Indian art and architecture is the persistent refusal of the craftsman to realize and accept the limitations of his material, and instead to work, not in sympathy with the wood or stone or metal on which he is employed, but in defiance of the intrinsic qualities of these materials. In the early stage of the art of figure sculpture or of building in stone one is not surprised by actual technical ineptitude or an attempted transference of for instance carpentry techniques to masonry, as so well demonstrated at Sanchi, but when mastery of the material was obtained, as so soon it was in India, it seems always to have been in danger of slipping down the dangerous descent of facility to the meretricious, and reaching the stage of extreme ingenuity of craftsmanship which could carve marble like ivory, solid stone into flimsy fretwork and give to hard rock figure-sculpture the appearance of yielding flesh with horrid fidelity. This preoccupation with the accidental of dexterity, which rates a work of art as a sort of conjuring trick achieving the impossible task of making something look exactly like something else, is not of course confined to India—witness in Europe the sculpture of Canova or most of the *objets d'art* in the Great Exhibition of

1851—nor is it a characteristic of oriental art at large, as the sculpture, bronze work and ceramics of China with their brilliant restraint and exquisite sensibility show, but in India it seems to me a more persistent quality throughout the country's art history than in any other region. At Ellora is one of the most famous Indian temples, the Kailasa, which illustrates this fatal weakness well—a building which is designed as if it were built of masonry in the normal way but is really cut from a solid mass of rock, and here also in other rock-temples is a mass of sculpture of the most elaborate, and to my eyes most unsatisfactory, kind.

The beginnings of rock-cut architecture in India—cutting out from the solid rock artificial caves which reproduce underground the features of stone or timber buildings made normally above the surface—go back to Mauryan times, but its real development in the Deccan was the product of Buddhism in the early centuries A.D. The fine-grained homogeneous volcanic formations of the plateau behind Bombay, eroded into frequent almost vertical rock-faces, were ideal for these elaborate pieces of subterranean architectural sculpture, and in this book the 'caves' of Ellora and Ajanta in this region are described. The work at Ajanta seems to have started in the first century B.C. and to have finished after about the middle of the seventh century A.D. when the main Buddhist work at Ellora begins, and by that time two forms of Buddhist sacred buildings had become stereotyped in their rock-cut form: the vihara—a monastery or hall for worship, a square lay-out with cells or cloisters around a central court (originally open but of course rock-roofed in the underground structures) with a shrine at the back opposite a verandah which opens to a forecourt in the open air; and the chaitya or place of congregational worship, oblong in plan with aisles formed by pillars, and an apsidal end containing a stupa—the whole exactly analogous to a Christian church with nave, aisles, sanctuary and altar. These types have been described in more detail in dealing with Ajanta, but both occur at Ellora.


DUMAR LENA
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17
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JAIN GROUP
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32
34
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KAILASA
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Numbering
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ELLORA
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The 'caves' here are numbered consecutively from the south, and the southernmost group, 1–12, are Buddhist, eleven viharas and one chaitya (No. 10), and their dates range from an overlap with Ajanta (late sixth—early seventh century, Nos. 1, 2, and 5) to the middle of the eighth century, the majority probably being constructed between about A.D. 700 and 750.

Of these Buddhist viharas, No. 2 shows in its sculptured pillar capitals analogies with those at Badami and with Ajanta No. 24 and probably dates between 580 and 642. The shrine contains a large figure of the Buddha on a lion throne flanked on the side wall by great standing figures of Boddhisatvas, and is one of the best preserved of the group. No. 3 has some pillars blocked out but left unfinished, and the 'vase and foliage' capitals in this vihara and No. 4 link up with Ajanta, where this type seems to have originated. In No. 5, of the same style and date as No. 2, there is an interesting arrangement of stone benches between the pillars probably for use as tables by the monks who lived in the twenty cells around, and in No. 6 the door-guardians of the shrine are figures of Boddhisatvas, standing under the branches of sacred trees. Of the remaining viharas the most important are Nos. 11 and 12—the so-called Do Tal and Tin Tal (though both are in fact of three stories) dating from the early eighth century. The Tin Tal especially is a most remarkably accomplished piece of work, with the usual shrine with a very large Buddha on the ground floor with attendant figures, and with an open verandah and pillared hall on the first floor with a shrine as usual in the back wall and numerous other sculptures. The top storey is most impressive, with its forty-two plain square columns in faultlessly accurate alignment and with the Buddha on a throne below which are two very finely sculptured deer. The chaitya, No. 10 (the Visvakarma), is one of the latest of these structures, probably about a century later than the latest chaitya at Ajanta. The facade is an interesting development of those in the earlier

examples, where light is admitted to the hall by a great window framed in a characteristic horseshoe arch, but here a reminiscence of this is seen but no more, and much reduced: inside, the roof and colonnades are in close imitation of wooden prototypes, with a band of rather over-wrought carving at the springing of the vault. The stupa is enormous and with a disproportionate figure of the Buddha with attendant figures on its front face, and in view of the detailed copying of timber technique in this chaitya mentioned above it is perhaps significant that the figure is locally worshipped as the patron god of carpenters.

With the next, and main, group of rock-temples we come to some seventeen constructions ranging in date from the eighth to the ninth centuries A.D. and belonging to the Brahmanical or Hindu religious tradition, this change in faith being coincident with the establishment of the Rashtrakuta dynasty in the Deccan: a king of this line is recorded in inscriptions as the builder of No. 15 (the Das Avatara) and of the great free-standing rock-temple, the Kailasa (No. 16). In these temples we meet, for the first time among the places described in this book, a profusion of medieval Indian figure-sculpture to which I, in common with so many Europeans, find it almost impossible to make any satisfactory aesthetic approach. Burgess' magnificently absurd comment on the Kailasa—'with all his wealth of imaginative device, the Hindu artist could not help betraying the depravity of his nature any more than those of other nations unenlightened by Christianity'—contains today a severer censure of the writer and his times than of the building to which it is applied; but even though we realize that morals have nothing to do with aesthetics the fac remains that it is extremely difficult to find in such sculpture any of the characteristics shared in great works of art of the world, whether recent African wood sculpture or T'ang pottery the Ravenna mosaics or Cézanne's paintings. Either an uniqu dispensation must be claimed for India or one must frankl admit that, viewed dispassionately and in its widest context

the sculpture is not, after all, really so wonderful as it is in India so often claimed to be.

Of these rock-temples, No. 14 has a shrine within a pillared hall, and the walls are covered with sculptures displaying the complex Hindu iconography which is even more confusing than that of Buddhism—Shiva dancing, Ravana shaking the Mountain of Heaven, the loathsome Kali, personification of the death-dealing diseases of the tropics, or Vishnu and his wife Lakshmi listening to music. Temple 15, the Das Avatara, has a central hall with small shrines and is in two stories, with Vaishnavite and Shaivite sculptures, and on the first floor on the north side is a particularly unpleasant figure composition of 'Mahadeva in his terrible form' with every horror appropriate to the scene painstakingly portrayed. Further scenes of violence and turmoil surge around the walls in uncontrolled verisimilitude. Of the remaining temples actually cut below the ground, No. 21, the Ramesvara, has an elaborate facade with figure-brackets and probably dates from the middle of the seventh century, and with 25 and 28 is among the earliest of the Hindu group. Here again is an abundance of mythological scenes in highly wrought sculpture. No. 29, the Dumar Lena, is owing to its position one of the most dramatic and impressive, having a great pillared hall 150 feet square with a shrine and three entrances, made possible by two ravines which flank the temple and onto which the side entrances open, that on the south having a flight of steps descending to the sacred stream below. At the entrances are boldly stylized lions carved in the round and there is figure-sculpture inside, including the marriage of Shiva and Parvati.

The Kailasa (No. 16), probably begun by Krishna I of the Rashtrakuta dynasty in 760, is a fantastic *tour de force* of craftsmanship, being a temple closely resembling the Lokesvara temple at Pattadkal made by digging out a great rectangular quarry 154 by 276 feet and over 100 feet deep around a central block of stone which has been formed into a simulacrum

of a masonry temple with immense competence. From the civil-engineering point of view, Fergusson has pointed out that such a mode of construction does not involve any more labour than building in the normal way, and perhaps rather less, but it is nevertheless an extraordinary concept with which to begin any form of building, and it has certainly produced a very extraordinary monument. In common with most ancient sculpture it was originally plastered and painted, though little remains of this today, and the temple presents a sombre mass of leaden black stone surrounded by the grey cliffs of the quarry whence it was hewn. One enters through a huge stone screen and is confronted by the *mandapa* for the Nandi bull of Shiva, connected to the main temple by a bridge and flanked by colossal free-standing pillars and two elephants, all sculptured from the living rock. The porch of the great shrine has fragments of paintings on its roof of at least two periods: these are interesting to compare with the paintings at Ajanta a century and more earlier. There is an immense profusion of sculptured ornament in high relief, and the most outstanding feature in this respect is the huge frieze of elephants and monsters around the plinth—a baroque conception which recalls in a curious way the Hellenistic Pergamene Altar and which rather unexpectedly succeeds in bearing the obvious weight of the superstructure despite its contorted frenzy of movement. In galleries cut in the faces of the surrounding rock are again elaborate figure compositions in a febrile, restless tangle of superabundant limbs. There can be no doubt but that the Kailasa is a compelling and impressive monument, sinister and secret, as one stands, deep in the cold rock-shadows with the friendly sunlit sky so far above one's head beyond the sheer quarry face, looking at the great frieze where nightmare monsters battle in eternal screaming conflict for ever silent, for ever still.

Beyond the last Hindu temple (No. 29, the Dumar Lena) is a long gap until one reaches the northernmost group, products of the Jain faith from the second half of the eighth century

onwards. There are two outstanding structures among these, the first (No. 31) being a miniature copy of the Kailasa itself in a quarry 80 by 130 feet, but as might be expected missing the dramatic effect of its prototype, which depends so much on sheer bulk and weight of carving; and the second, the Indra Sabha (No. 33). This is an interrelated group of two double-storied temples with additional shrines, etc., with elaborate sculptures of the Tirthankaras, or legendary preceptors of the Jain faith, together with Buddhist and Hindu figures accommodatingly included in the pantheon. From the first-story verandah can be seen an interesting unfinished piece of sculpture in the rock face which shows the method employed—the head (with elaborate head-dress) is finished completely, as is the necklace, but the rest of the figure is hardly indicated at all. The sculptors evidently finished the work as they went, without a preliminary blocking out of the whole figure or composition: a method of work only possible where little or no regard was paid to a formal arrangement of masses or the elements constituting a group.

Chapter VIII

MOUNT ABU

A MOUNTAIN made by command of the deity of the Himalayas by his son and a monstrous serpent, where the great gods before the gods lived, dug out lakes with their finger-nails, and re-created the caste of Kshatriyas in a ritual fire-pit despite the opposition of the whole demon world, where a hole in a temple floor leads down to the underworld and in which faintly glimpsed is the great toe of Shiva himself as he steadies the mountain with his foot—whatever phrase might be applied to Abu in its remoteness, 'god-forsaken' would certainly be the

least appropriate. An outlier of the Aravalli Hills, this wooded mountain mass, sacred to Hindus and Jains alike, rises in sheer isolation from the plains to a height of over 5,000 feet at its highest point, and in the high valleys between the rocky peaks are a number of shrines, two of which are Jain temples of the eleventh and twelfth centuries A.D. which, whatever in the ultimate analysis may be said of their status as works of art, stand out even in India as astonishing pieces of virtuosity and intricate craftsmanship in stone-carving.

When we turn from the cosmic extravaganzas with which Indian legend associates Arbuda or Abu to the more sober historical record, we find that in the middle of the tenth century A.D. it lay in the territory of the Chalukyan Anhilwara dynasty ruling at Chandravati—a city of which scanty remains exist in the plain south of Abu, though largely despoiled for railway ballast in the last century—and in the reign of Bhimadeva I the first of the great Jain temples on the Dilwara site was built. Abu was at this time under the local rule of a raja named Dhandu, but owing to suspicion of disaffection the king sent one of his ministers, Vimala, as Governor to Abu and it was he who financed the construction of the temple now known by his name, which was consecrated by the priest Vardhamana in 1031. The king Kumarapala, third in succession from Bhimadeva I, was himself converted to the Jain faith; and his minister, Chahudeva, was instrumental in the reign of his successor, Bhimadeva II, in bringing to the royal notice two brothers, Tejapala and Vastupala, who in 1230–6 built the second great Dilwara temple while acting as the king's most important ministers. They appear to have been outstanding administrators, continuing in office after the fall of the Chalukyan dynasty at the court of the first of the Vaghela rulers in 1241, when, as the contemporary account puts it, 'the dominion of their lord was irradiated with prosperity, and the courts of the palace filled with elephants and steeds'. By the intrigues of a Brahman named Nagara they fell from royal esteem and



Archaeological Survey of India

TAXILA: STUCCO FIGURE OF BUDDHA IN THE JAULIAN MONASTERY. FIFTH CENTURY A.D.



Stuart P

MOUNT ABU: SCULPTURE OF BOWMAN, ACHALESWAR. LATE THIRTEENTH CENTU

only the aid of the poet Somesvara, whom they had once befriended, saved them from execution.

So much for the history behind the Dilwara temples, which lie in a rather forbidding walled-in group eastwards from the civil station of Abu in a fantastic landscape where palms and conifers compete, among enormous grey rounded boulders like petrified elephants; but before describing the temples, a parenthesis on the Jain religion may serve to explain some of the outstanding features of their construction and iconography. Historians concur in accepting the Jain 'Tirthankara' or preceptor Mahavira as an historical figure. This founder of the Jain religion was roughly contemporary with Gautama Buddha and king Bimbisara in the sixth century B.C., but in Jain belief he comes after twenty-three previous legendary Tirthankaras (analogous to the previous incarnation of the Enlightened One in Buddhism). Buddhism and Jainism were in origin both evolved from Hindu thought at the stage expressed in the Upanishads, and had much in common. From the point of view of the temple-haunting visitor the most important features to note are that the main dedication is to one of the Tirthankaras (e.g. to Adinath, the first of these, in the Vimala temple, to Nemnath, the twenty-second, at the Tejapala) and that, in subsidiary cells, about the central shrine are figures of the other Tirthankaras, distinguished only by their appropriate emblems (a bull, a thunderbolt, a swastika or other sign). As in Mahayana Buddhism, virtue attaches to repetition, and by an infinite duplication of Tirthankara images much merit is gained by the donor.

The visitor to the Dilwara group of temples passes down a paved lane between high walls, and the first temple (dedicated to Parsvanath), is that to the left, a structure of the mid-fifteenth century with a three-storied central shrine surrounded by porticos on all four sides. There is a foretaste here of the elaborate figure-sculpture to be seen in even more exuberant form in the earlier temples, and on the walls and ceilings are amusing paintings

in red, probably of no particular antiquity but containing spirited drawings of animals and figures well worth notice. At the end of the lane beyond this one turns right through a gateway to the main temple group. The Vimala temple lies to the east and consists of three main elements—a shrine within a courtyard entered by a domed portico, facing which is a building containing originally effigies of Vimala and his family on elephants, carved in marble and brightly painted. The riders are now destroyed, though Vimala himself is replaced by a plaster figure: of this remarkable group a local guide-book says 'the well-decorated statues of elephants are in a kind of miniature Mme Tussaud's Wax Works', and this seem an adequate description enough. Beyond this, in the courtyard is the great domed portico before the main shrine which is perhaps the most elaborately conceived piece of stonework in the history of architecture. As so often in Indian architecture, a wooden prototype has been the aesthetic downfall of the too-ingenious craftsman, who has carved and undercut and fretted and tortured the marble into an eventual fantasy beyond even the intricacies possible to wood, around which fifty-two images of Tirthankaras glare stonily out of their cells. The central shrine, lit only from its doorway, has a charming Victorian glass chandelier hanging from a ceiling of dusty mirrors and pink and green bathroom tiles above the great yellow image of Adinath.

The Tejapala temple, to the north, is very similar to the Vimala in its plan and immense display of exuberant carved marble with foliage and figure-sculpture. I cannot feel that it is possible to defend such a direct violation of the intrinsic nature of stone by cutting it up into lace doylies and wedding-cakes on any aesthetic grounds, but if technical skill of almost terrifying competence and virtuosity is in itself to be admired, the Vimala and Tejapala temples are the places to visit. The 'Elephant House' of the Tejapala lies in the courtyard to the east, and the geometrical piercing of the stone screens is often

pleasing and not over-elaborated. The remaining temple worth seeing at Dilwara lies between the Tejapala and the Parsvanath temple first described, with the surrounding cells not completed. It is probably of fourteenth- or fifteenth-century date and its comparative lack of decoration offers relief to the bewildered eye after the earlier buildings.

Eastwards from the Dilwara temples a trackway leads to the shrines of Achaleswar and the fort of Achalgarh some five miles away, which are worth visiting from their interest and the beauty of their surroundings. The track runs through open country with strange hollowed and pierced rocks that suggest the Creator playing at being Mr Henry Moore, and brings one past the village of Oria (with a temple repaired at the beginning of the thirteenth century) to Achaleswar, a group of shrines and temples by a tank and at the foot of the hill on which the fort lies. On the north side of the pleasantly derelict and overgrown tank, known as Mandakini-kund, is a group of three life-size water-buffaloes, carved in the round, and behind them a striking and vigorous carving in three-quarters relief of a bowman, dated 1286 and by tradition named Adipal. There are various small shrines about the tank, and the interior of the dome of one at the western end is decorated with excellent and lively paintings of horsemen and other figures recalling those in the Parsvanath temple at Dilwara. The main temple of Shiva is a not very interesting whitewashed building with an inscription recording its repair in 1320 and has in the sanctuary floor a hole which is alleged to be bottomless and in which is said to be seen an object claimed as the toe of Shiva. There is a rather fine life-size Nandi bull in brass, dated 1408 and with an attendant figure of a bard of 1633, and outside is an iron Shiva's trident of the early fifteenth century. The Toran or decorative gateway in the temple compound was used to support the scales on which the Lords of Sirohi State were periodically weighed against gold.

The Achalgarh fort is approached by a path and steps leading through what is known as the Hanuman Gate to a plateau with

a small lake, and continuing up through the Champa Gate—both probably thirteenth-century. Above the second gate is a large Jain temple built by two brothers in the service of the Rana of Udaipur in 1513. It has few architectural qualities but has a breath-taking position on the edge of the hill, recalling the similarly placed Buddhist monasteries of Tibet. There is an upper fort on the hill-top (some 4,500 feet above sea-level) built in the early fifteenth century, with a curious double tank and a hermit's cave nearby.

The remainder of the numerous shrines on Mount Abu are notable rather for their sanctity and legendary associations than for architectural interest. The Gae-Mukh site, east of the civil station, is the reputed site of the Agni-kund or fire-pit where the gods made the heroic families of Rajputana, and there is a fourteenth-century temple and a tank there.

Chapter IX

THE MONUMENTS OF DELHI

'Europeans', wrote Vincent Smith, 'do not easily realize the fact that Delhi is among the most modern of the great Indian cities', and indeed in comparison with such towns as Patna or Muttra, with a continuous civic history of well over two millennia, Delhi's nine hundred and fifty years of existence as a city do not make such an impressive showing. An earlier settlement, representing the legendary Indrapat, may await the archaeologist in the lower levels of the mound on which the sixteenth-century Purana Qila stands, for this is almost certainly a *tell* of accumulated ruins of early settlements, and I have picked up potsherds probably of Kushan date (first and second centuries A.D.) on the edges of the mound. But the earliest visible and historical city of Delhi was founded by a Hindu dynasty in A.D. 993, and since that date successive settlements or 'cities' have been built, not, as usual in ancient oriental sites, each upon the ruins of the last, but scattered over a tract of country of some seventy square miles on the right bank of the Jumna River. Today these accumulated architectural remnants are frequently referred to as the 'Seven Cities of Delhi'—a misleading description which the visitor finds hard to reconcile with a landscape strewn haphazard with a thousand mosques, forts, tombs, walls and incomprehensible ruined structures, few of which seem to fall into any coherent plan suggesting a city. For the cities of Delhi comprise palace complexes, citadels, shrines, cemeteries—these were the centres of government and religion about which clustered the impermanent buildings of the officials and merchants who had still a strong tradition of the nomad camp in their blood, and it is these administrative or sacred buildings that have survived today despite centuries of pillaging for stone.

The immense number of monuments in the Delhi area makes it impossible to do more than indicate to the visitor the most typical of the various architectural styles.

It is usual to classify the buildings of Delhi by dynasties or by names such as 'First Pathan Style', but simplicity and at the same time chronological coherence is better obtained by grouping them roughly by centuries, into which the styles and dynasties fit quite reasonably, and the scheme works out as follows:

Centuries	Dynasties	'Cities'
13th	Slave (1193–1290) Khilji (1290–1320)	1. Qutb area 2. Siri
14th	Tughlaq (1321–1414)	3. Tughlaqabad 4. Jahanpannah 5. Firozabad
15th	Sayyid (1414–50) Lodi (1450–1526)	Mosques and tombs only
16th	Mogul (Babur and Humayun) (1526–40) Sher Shah (1540–5) Akbar (1556–1605)	6. Purana Qila
17th	Mogul (1605–1707) (Jahangir, Shahjahan and Aurangzeb)	7. Shajahanabad
18–19th	Mogul (1707–1857) Aurangzeb's successors)	Mosques and tombs only

Thirteenth Century

Of the Rajput town existing prior to the Muslim conquest of Delhi in 1193 practically nothing remains *in situ* except the ruined town walls, now mounds of rubble north of the Qutb area of monuments and visible from the main road. Outside this wall, nearer New Delhi, the road cuts through the remains of the town walls of 1193, in much the same wrecked condition,

but the central area contains, in a fair state of preservation, the great Mosque of the Might of Islam with its astonishing Minar, a slender tower nearly 240 feet high, both mosque and minar dating in their original form from the final year of the twelfth century. These monuments commemorate the decisive Muslim conquest of northwest India by their builder Qutb-ud-din Aibak in no uncertain fashion—the mosque is not only built on the plinth of a destroyed Hindu temple but its cloisters are built of the pillars and roofing stones of twenty-seven more temples, their sculptures mutilated to suit the aniconic faith of Islam. Architecturally this cloister is, as might be expected, a failure, but the great five-arched screen to the west is a tremendous and dramatic achievement containing in its elaborate surface patterning of ornament a brilliant fusion of Islamic and Hindu sculptural modes. In front stands the Iron Pillar, a Gupta (fourth-century A.D.) monument brought probably from Muttra by Qutb-ud-din and bearing a Sanskrit inscription in honour of a King Chandra 'by the breezes of whose prowess the southern ocean is even still perfumed'.

Altamsh, the second of the Slave dynasty, brought about an enlargement of the mosque to more than twice its size, using more Hindu pillars and extending the screen on both sides by 1229—about the time of the building of Salisbury Cathedral in England. It is interesting to note on the screen extension and the adjacent tomb of Altamsh how by this time all Hindu influence had been eliminated in the surface carving which, with its flatness and characteristic Cufic decorative inscriptions, conforms to the Islamic tradition common to all regions of the faith from Europe to India and is very similar to that on the great screen at Ajmer. At this time too the Minar was completed, though in the form we see it today the upper stories are restorations of the fourteenth century and later.

Grandiose final enlargements of the great mosque were planned but never completed by Ala-ud-din of the Khilji dynasty at the end of the thirteenth and beginning of the four-

teenth century. The fine Alai Darwaza is the main feature completed and extant, and the unfinished stump of a projected minar twice the size of Qutb-ud-din's. Other monuments of this period are the walls of Siri (the second 'city' of Delhi and lying to the north of the Qutb) and the fine mosque of Jamaat Khana in the squalid but entertaining Nizam-ud-din complex of shrines nearer New Delhi on the Muttra road.

Fourteenth Century

The early years of the fourteenth century saw a new dynasty established at Delhi, that of the Tughlaqs, who reigned over a period of time approximately contemporary with Geoffrey Chaucer. Under these rulers a distinctive building-style appears, forceful and almost puritanical in its restrained ornament and relying, to a degree rare even in Islamic buildings in India, on the proportions of the building masses rather than surface ornament for its effect, with large areas of bare plastered walls and a frequent use of attached half-pillars recalling in outline the Qutb Minar. The enormous palace-fortress of Tughlaqabad, the third 'city', lies to the east of the Qutb area and, built in the 1320's, is still immensely impressive with its battered walls and pointed arches like a Crusader's castle. A smaller fort, Adilabad, was built slightly later; and joined to Tughlaqabad by a causeway is the tomb-fortress of the founder of the dynasty, Ghiyas-ud-din, a building showing more ashlar work and ornament than the subsequent examples of the mature Tughlaq style. His successor, Mohammed Tughlaq, is one of the more fantastically unbridled tyrants of history who, among other excesses, forcibly removed the entire population of Delhi on one occasion to the fortress of Daulatabad in the Deccan. He is credited with the fourth 'city', Jahanpannah, between the Qutb and Siri, and though its exact boundaries cannot now be traced several monuments exist in the area and are worth an expedition across the fields to see, notably the fine but seldom-visited Begumpur Mosque (actually dating from Firoz Shah's time) and the two

adjacent structures, the Bijai Mandal and the Bara Khumba, apparently remains of noblemen's houses of this period or a little later.

Under Firoz Shah, the last of the Tughlaqs, a new palace complex was built at Firozabad or Firoz Shah Kotla, eight miles north of the Qutb area and on the other side of New Delhi. The ruins of this, the fifth 'city', are sadly fragmentary though the mosque and some of the palace quarters are partly standing, but the most remarkable feature is a series of terraced platforms on which is set up one of the third-century B.C. pillars of polished sandstone bearing the seven edicts of Asoka and originally erected in the twenty-sixth year of his reign near Ambala, whence it was brought by Firoz Shah. The edicts promulgate various religious observances, including magic taboos against killing and eating animals listed in detail ('bats, queen ants, terrapins and prawns', for example). The tomb of Firoz Shah is at Hauz Khas, between New Delhi and the Qutb area, and forms part of an attractive group of ruins including a madrassa or school set on the edge of a huge artificial lake, now dry, dug by Ala-ud-din in the thirteenth century.

Fifteenth Century

The Tughlaq dynasty was brought to an abrupt close by the incursions of 'Tamburlaine and that Tartarian rout' in 1398. After the sack of Delhi by Timur chaos supervened, although a so-called Sayyid dynasty of local chieftains ruled until 1450, when an Afghan, Bahlol Lodi, founded a Sultanate that ruled mainly from Agra until the second decade of the sixteenth century. The Delhi monuments of this time are therefore mainly tombs of the Lodi dynasty, perhaps placed here rather than at Agra owing to the sanctity of the Nizam-ud-din shrine to the northwest of which they largely lie, forming a very pleasant group of buildings in the Lady Willingdon Park. An important innovation in tomb-plan appears alongside square buildings in the fourteenth-century manner—an octagonal building sur-

mounted by a dome and surrounded by a verandah, and in its relatively elaborate ornament often showing Hindu influences. The tomb of Sikander Lodi stands within a square enclosure which seems to indicate a transition from the fortress of Ghiyas-ud-din and a step towards the great garden enclosures of such later tombs as that of Humayun.

Sixteenth Century

Early in the sixteenth century Babur, the first of the great Mogul line, invaded India and won the decisive battle of Panipat not far from Delhi, but the dynasty was not secure until after the death of Sher Shah, who usurped the power and ruled at Delhi for five years. To him we must attribute the building, or at least completion, of the Purana Qila, the sixth 'city', in the 1540's, with the mosque and building known as the Sher Mandal inside. In these buildings we see the very effective use of polychrome ashlar masonry which was later used to such a supremely satisfactory degree in the great tomb of Humayun, one of the really outstanding buildings of Delhi and of the world, built after the emperor's death by his widow and a Persian architect who introduced for the first time to India several of the brilliant solutions of architectural problems that had been worked out in the buildings of Iran, and also developed to great beauty the idea of the surrounding formal garden within its rectangular enclosure.

Seventeenth Century

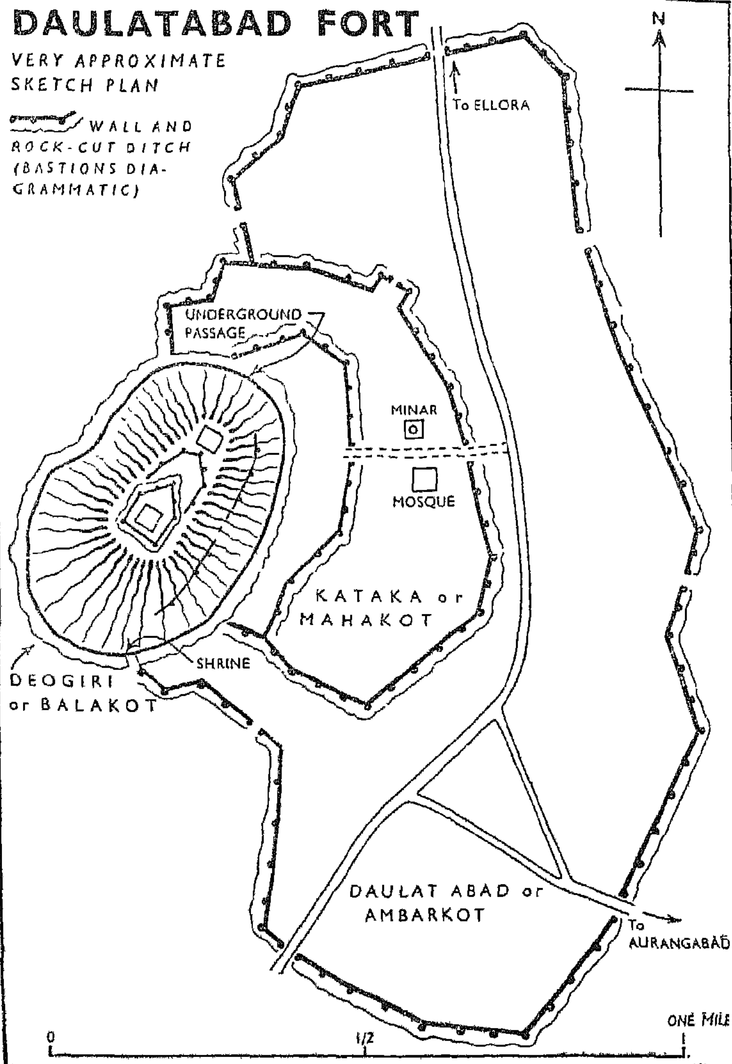
The emperor Akbar, contemporary of Queen Elizabeth of England, had moved the court to Agra and Fatehpur Sikri, and his successor Jahangir centred his interest on Lahore. We have not therefore in Delhi any of the great earlier Mogul buildings after Humayun's Tomb, but under Shahjahan, in the mid-seventeenth century, Delhi was again the capital, and the city of Shahjahanabad, now the modern inhabited city known familiarly as 'Old Delhi', was built, with its tremendous circuit of walls and its palace-citadel, the Red Fort. Inside the impos-

ing red sandstone walls of the Fort, part of the royal palace remains that has escaped decay in late Mogul times or destruction by the British military in the nineteenth century, notably the elaborate audience halls, various private apartments, bathrooms, pavilions, and a mosque. To my mind the highly elaborated architecture and ornament in marble with *pietra dura* or mirror inlay give at their best a fantastic picture of decadent magnificence to which the famous now-destroyed Peacock Throne would have added the final touch of inconceivably expensive bad taste, and at their worst have a certain faded meretricious appeal.

The contemporary Jama Masjid is an extremely impressive building despite its sharing the period flavour of rather overstressed and effete magnificence, but it must be confessed that at sunset it relapses into the shamelessly sentimental silhouette of the final shot in an Oriental Travelogue.

Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

Visitors to Delhi should not ignore one or two buildings belonging to the last phase before the building of New Delhi, that 'monument to the dry souls of clerks' as a contemporary Indian novelist has described it. The tomb of Safdar Jang (1753) usually decried as hopelessly degenerate, has a great deal of quiet charm with its low-relief plasterwork, and embedded in the architectural banalities of New Delhi is the observatory of the Raja Jai Singh, built in 1724, and presenting, in its enormous astronomical instruments built in masonry, a formal composition of curves and masses as excitingly beautiful as it is unintentional. The church of St James at the Kashmir Gate (1830) is a delightful example of the sound and gracious classical buildings put up by the British in India in Regency times; a rather more eccentric production is the remains of the summer residence of Sir Theophilus Metcalfe at the Qutb, where a Muslim tomb is adorned with a classical portico and various mock ruins diversify the view on surrounding hillocks.


DAULATABAD FORT
VERY APPROXIMATE SKETCH PLAN
WALL AND ROCK-CUT DITCH (BASTIONS DIAGRAMMATIC)
N
To ELLORA
UNDERGROUND PASSAGE
MINAR
MOSQUE
KATAKA or MAHAKOT
SHRINE
DEOGIRI or BALAKOT
DAULAT ABAD or AMBARKOT
To AURANGABAD
ONE MILE
0
1/2
1

Chapter X

DAULATABAD

It seems remarkable that such an outstanding work of fortification as the citadel and town of Daulatabad in the Deccan should be so little known to the intelligent public in India, the more especially since it was actually, for a short time, the capital of Islamic India under the fourteenth-century Sultanate of Delhi. Nor is it inaccessible or inconspicuous—the main road to the Ellora rock-cut temples actually runs through part of the fortifications, while the 600-foot-high rock mass forming the citadel is a landmark for miles around. But for some reason it is seldom visited and architecturally remains undescribed to this day—no plan of the complex and very interesting fortifications has been made and its history alone has been sketchily pieced together.

Daulatabad owes its beginnings to its geological formation—a conical hill of rock rising abruptly from the plain to about 600 feet and situated by the ancient 'ghat' or roadway which runs past Ellora and which probably dates from at least the first century B.C. Such a natural citadel commanding a highway would have been the obvious choice for a fortress at any time, but the earliest structural evidence on the site is not defensive, but consists of rock-cut caves with pillar capitals in the Andhra style of the first couple of centuries A.D., later to be incorporated in the system of underground passages by which access to the citadel was gained when the huge fort was complete. A minimum of artificial defences would be necessary on a hill so strongly fortified by nature to make it deserve the name of stronghold, and when under the name of Deogiri it first appears in historical records in the late twelfth century we have no evidence of whether it had been deliberately fortified. But

it is almost certainly to this or even an earlier period that we should attribute the astonishing work of defence that we see today at the citadel of Daulatabad—the scarping of the entire circuit of the mass to a vertical rock-cut face 150 to 200 feet high with a great square-section water-filled moat at the bottom, dug 50 feet into solid rock. The historical record mentioned above refers to the Hindu Yadava dynasty of the Deccan, a king of which, Bhillama, extended his territory southwards to the Krishna River and founded his capital at Deogiri in 1187, and it may be to him that we should attribute this colossal piece of work which shows at least that the descendants of the quarry-men who hewed out the Kailasa at Ellora had not lost their forefathers' skill. That the work is Hindu and not a part of the subsequent Islamic fortifications on the site is shown by a very curious feature on the south, where a Hindu cave-shrine of great but unknown antiquity is still venerated at the base of the rock-cut scarp and to which access is given by a narrow causeway of solid rock left in cutting the surrounding moat—a feature which would obviously not be a product of Islam. We may conclude, therefore, that the scarping and cutting of the moat around the citadel is Hindu work dating from 1187 or perhaps earlier, and on the evidence of the re-used pillars from Hindu temples in buildings within the later city walls and also the references in the contemporary accounts of the Muslim attacks on the place to 'suburbs' below the citadel, that some sort of town existed on the gently sloping or flat ground to the east.[1]

By the end of the twelfth century the Muslim invaders had firmly established themselves on the northwest Indian plains and had founded the Sultanate of Delhi, but the Deccan was as yet free from their incursions. But a hundred years later Deogiri was to have the first intimation of its subsequent fate and annexation, for in 1294 Ala-ud-din, nephew of Jalal-ud-din, the founder

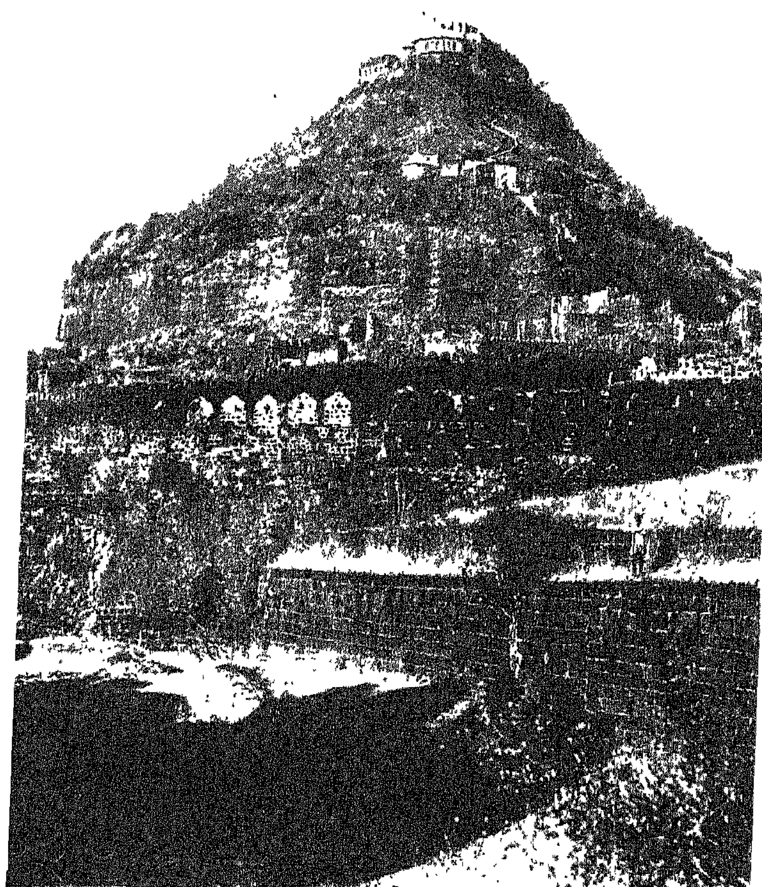
[1] Haig (*Historic Landmarks of the Deccan*, 1919, p. 12) states that the citadel was undefended by a scarp or ditch in 1294 but gives no reference for this, nor indeed for any other statements in his book.

of the Khilji dynasty of Delhi, raided the Deccan and attacked Deogiri, where Ramachandra was ruling. The lower city was plundered while the raja retreated to the citadel with a garrison and sacks of what was believed to be provisions, and entered into negotiations with the aggressor. A disastrous battle with an army led by Ramachandra's son from outside Deogiri was followed by the discovery that the provision bags contained nothing but salt. A treaty was made highly advantageous to Ala-ud-din, who was able to return to the north loaded with treasure, murder his uncle and so obtain the throne by means not unusual in the history of the Delhi sultans, with the plunder of Deogiri as a useful means of persuading recalcitrants of the legality of his succession. Tribute was paid to Delhi for a time: it lapsed, and punitive expeditions were sent in the early years of the fourteenth century to recover the allegiance of the Rajas of Deogiri, who remained vassals of the Delhi Sultanate until the final conquest of the Deccan by Qutb-ud-din Mubarak, the last of the Khiljis, in 1318–20, before the usual palace revolutions and murders heralding a new dynasty, the Tughlaqs.

It is with the second of the Tughlaq sultans, Mohammed Tughlaq (1325–51) that Deogiri, renamed Daulatabad, is mainly associated. This man stands out, even among the early Islamic rulers of northern India, as a tyrant exhibiting to excess all the faults which in rather less gross degree characterize all these unlovable despots, and we are fortunate in having an entertaining and relatively objective account of this monarch and his acts written by the great Islamic traveller from Tangier, Ibn Battuta, who was at the court of Mohammed Tughlaq and in his employment for nine years. It was during this period that the sultan conceived the fantastic scheme of moving not only the seat of government but the entire civil population bodily from Delhi to Daulatabad—over 600 miles in a straight line and in terms of actual road travel very much more. Ibn Battuta gives as a cause the anonymous abusive letters which the people of Delhi sent to their ruler under the contemporary equivalent

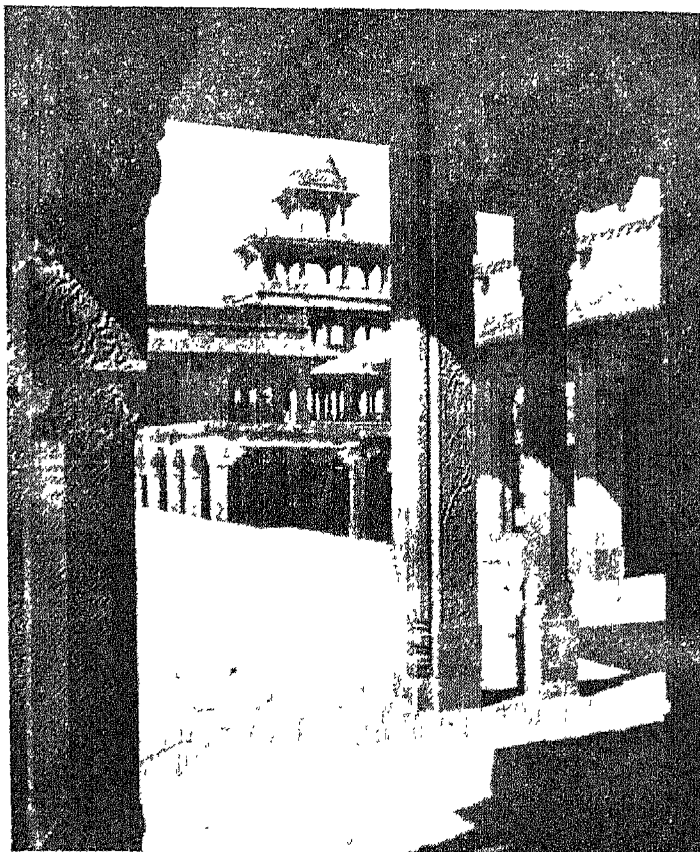
of 'Top Secret Cover' so that they had to be opened personally by him—to an unbalanced mind such an annoyance might well be enough to induce a mad outburst of hysterical rage and an insensate irrevocable decree, which gave three days' notice for the total evacuation of the Jahanpannah city which he had built. The reader should turn to the original account for the details of this terrible forced transference of population with the pitiless forty days' march southwards, and the unforgettable picture of the sultan standing on the roof of his palace at night and looking out over Delhi 'where there was neither fire nor smoke nor lamp' and saying, 'Now my mind is tranquil and my wrath appeased'.

This was some time before 1334, and we do not know how much of the great fortifications had been constructed by the time the population was moved. The notable architectural transition from ashlar work to plastered rubble in the Tughlaq work at Delhi after Mohammed Tughlaq's time has been attributed to his removal, with the rest of the inhabitants, of the skilled Delhi masons who had built Tughlaqabad and other constructions, for employment at Daulatabad where the work is first-class ashlar building with the grim and extremely suitable black or grey Deccan trap, and we must attribute the extant fortifications to the period c. 1330–50, with of course later additions and alterations. As will be seen on the plan, these fortifications constitute three concentric lines of defence culminating in the citadel with its rock-cut defences which, as we have seen, it is reasonable to attribute to the pre-Islamic phase of the site's history. Throughout, the defensive system consists of a wall with bastions standing on the inner edge of a rock-cut ditch and having formidable gateways with elaborated local defences. The outermost wall encloses an irregular oval area about 1½ miles by ¾ mile linking up with the citadel rock at north and south and having seven gateways, and the modern road from Aurangabad to Ellora runs through it from south to north. Ibn Battuta, who visited Daulatabad about 1340,



Archaeological Survey of India

DAULATABAD: THE CITADEL WITH ROCK-CUT SCARP, PROBABLY TWELFTH CENTURY A.D., AND ADDITIONAL DEFENCES c. 1330-50



Stuart Piggott

FATEHPUR SIKRI· PANCH MAHAL AND TURKISH SULTANA'S HOUSE
c. 1570–80 A.D.

describes this as the town proper: the women there, he says, 'God has endowed with special beauty particularly in their noses and eyebrows' and he comments on the 'infidel' (i.e. Hindu) merchants there with their vast wealth and their trade in precious stones, but comes back to the women—'there is an exceedingly fine and spacious bazaar for singers and dancing-girls . . . containing numerous shops beautified with carpets, and in the centre of it there is a sort of cradle on which the singing-girl sits or reclines. She is adorned with all kinds of ornaments and her attendants swing her cradle.' And so on, being clearly much charmed with these 'infidel' delights, and squeezing in an apologetic postscript that there were also mosques in this delicious bazaar. This outer town of Daulatabad was in the mid-seventeenth century known as Ambarkot.

The second line of defence Ibn Battuta calls the Kataka, and it was later referred to as the Mahakot, the great fort. It is an impressive structure, with a fine gateway which is an interesting complex of building periods and through which one enters the main fort from the modern road. The fort encloses an area about ¾ by ¼ mile joining onto the citadel and containing an inner defended area now occupied by ruins of palaces of Tughlaq and later date. In the outer portion of the Kataka stands a fine and conspicuous minar of a type more appropriate to Turkey or Iran than India—it was built in 1445 under the Bahmani dynasty then ruling in this part of the Deccan and is known as the Chand Minar. Mosques in this area utilize Hindu architectural members from destroyed temples, and up against the great moat of the citadel is a pleasing ruined group of palaces and other buildings including the so-called 'China Palace' used as a state prison after the fall of Golconda and Bijapur in the late seventeenth century. There are some interesting bronze guns of fine design and ornament dating from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The citadel—the original Deogiri, the Balakot of the seventeenth-century writers — now towers above the visitor with its

spectacular smooth-cut rock-face and sullen dark waters in the moat. Ibn Battuta said access was gained by a leather ladder taken up each night, and it is probable that he was not told the full details of the underground approach by which communication was in fact made. This rambling complex of passages, guard chambers and the re-used Andhra caves mentioned above was thought by him to be dungeons, in which he declared 'there are huge rats, bigger than cats—in fact cats run away from them and cannot defend themselves against them, so they can be captured only by employing ruses. I saw them there and marvelled at them'. Today, even without the rats, we may marvel at these ingenious subterranean approaches which fulfil one's schoolboy dreams nourished on *King Solomon's Mines*—intricate contrivances of pitfalls and secret chambers where swordsmen lurked to decapitate the unwary foe, and a splendid culmination at the top of the final stairway in the form of a sliding iron trapdoor made red-hot by a vast fire built upon it, and still there in rusty retirement from active duty. Above ground the ascent continues up the slope past a charming summer-house built for Shahjahan on his visit in 1636 and on the summit, within a final rock-cut ditch and a wall, the ultimate tiny citadel with another fine eighteenth-century gun in its original mountings.

In this account of present-day Daulatabad I have mentioned several features later than the Tughlaqs. Its history subsequent to 1340 was briefly as follows. By 1344 Mohammed Tughlaq had tired of his experiment in forcible folk migration and had returned to Delhi, giving up his southern capital and permitting those who wished to come back to their original homes. Rebellions broke out in the Deccan, and Daulatabad was seized, attacked, and plundered by Mohammed Tughlaq in a punitive raid, but was finally taken over by Ala-ud-din Bahmani in 1347. Bahmani monarchs continued to rule here until the end of the fifteenth century, but after one of the recurrent periods of internal warfare Ahmad Nizam Shah took Daulatabad in 1500

and it remained in the hands of the Nizam Shahi dynasty for many years, becoming capital of the kingdom in 1607, and it was not until 1633, after a notable siege of four months, that Shahjahan took Daulatabad and added it to the Mogul kingdom. The fortress was occupied by Aurangzeb before his accession to the throne, and in 1724 it became a part of the Nizam of Hyderabad's dominions.

Note on the plan:—As there is no plan of Daulatabad available I have compiled a very rough sketch lay-out from my field notes and photographs, and an enlargement of the Survey of India map. The result should be regarded with grave misgivings but does give an approximate idea of the system of fortification.

Chapter XI

FATEHPUR SIKRI

EARLY in the year 1583, Queen Elizabeth of England addressed a letter to a fellow sovereign, 'the most invincible and most mightie prince, Lord Zelabdim Echebar, king of Cambaya'. It is unlikely that this arrogant queen of a small northern European state imagined the recipient as other than an outlandish 'Moorish' prince in a vague setting of oriental luxury: it is certain that she did not consider herself as entering into correspondence with the ruler of an empire already so outstanding in extent and wealth that by the time of Elizabeth's death it must have been, with the exception of China, incomparably the largest and richest kingdom of the world. The emperor Jalal-ud-din Akbar, to whom the letter was brought by a small band of English merchants, received these foreigners in 1585 in a town 'much greater than London and very populous', where the surprised Englishmen saw 'many fine carts,

and many of them carved and gilded with gold, with two wheels, which be drawn with two little Buls about the bignesse of our great dogs in England' and noted that the city was a 'great resort of merchants from Persia and out of India, and very much merchandise of silke and cloth, and of precious stones, both Rubies, Diamonds and Pearles'. This rich city had been built by Akbar ten years previously on a rocky hill at Fatehpur Sikri near Agra, and remains today one of the most intensely individual architectural conceptions in the world. There can be few places where the visitor so surely finds himself confronting across the centuries an outstanding personality, every aspect of whose subtle and dominating character has been impressed on the buildings he caused to be built: were little known of Akbar's character from documentary sources one might guess much, and rightly, from the architecture of Fatehpur Sikri; immense ambition, intellectual subtlety, a catholic but exquisite taste, a sense of the drama of royalty sometimes raised to the pitch of hysteria—all these qualities, which are in fact fully documented by contemporary observers, are innate in the deserted red sandstone palace-complex which Akbar built in 1569–70 and which served as his capital for about 15 years.

The Mogul dynasty of India, of which Akbar was the third emperor, was a very remarkable family of men, several of whom are intimately known to us from their autobiographies or the writings of close associates. The founder, Babur, a Chagatai Turk descended from Genghiz Khan and Timur, gives in his own *Memoirs* an unforgettable personal portrait of a highly intelligent yet ruthless conqueror who regarded the country and the people among whom he carved out an empire with undisguised contempt, and although his grandson Akbar identified himself to a far greater degree with Indian sentiment, yet he too preserved throughout his life the tradition of detachment and independence from both the Islamic and the Hindu cultures over which he ruled. Born in November 1542, when his father Humayun was an exile from the usurper Sher Shah, he

succeeded to a problematical title in India on his father's death after six months of regained rule in January 1556. Within five years he held the Punjab, Gwalior and Ajmer, and the Ganges Valley eastwards to Benares. From this he embarked on a well-calculated policy of territorial acquisition by all the means open to an Asiatic monarch no more scrupulous than the time demanded, and at the time of his death in 1605 his empire comprised Baluchistan, Afghanistan, Kashmir, all western India southward to the Godavari River; the Ganges basin in its entirety, and a coastal stretch southwards to Puri, with a land revenue computed to have a contemporary value equal to twenty million Elizabethan English pounds.[1]

But the imperialist, the successful campaigner and diplomat, represents but one facet of Akbar's complex personality. Not only was he an eager and discriminating patron of the arts of music, architecture and painting but he was in all ways a man of intense intellectual curiosity, and an outstandingly powerful memory enabled him to discount the curious handicap of formal illiteracy and to render him in learned controversy or conversation more than the equal of those who could read and write but lacked the wide and searching intellect of their sovereign. The strongly built man with the thin eyebrows and the narrow eyes of his Mongol ancestors, walking with a peculiar limp of the left leg, in shoes of his own designing, and not infrequently dressed in European clothes of black silk or velvet, talking in a loud strong voice, subject to melancholic moods or fits of violent anger and yet with an intimate charm that was insensibly instinct with royal gravity, cannot have failed to impress those who met him, and it is this man that we come so near to meeting ourselves in his buildings at Fatehpur Sikri.

It was in 1569, the fourteenth year of his reign, that Akbar

[1] It is interesting to note that this revenue would only imply that a little over 15% of Akbar's empire was taxable arable land. In British India today 35% of the total area is arable. Queen Elizabeth's annual revenue was about a quarter of a million pounds.

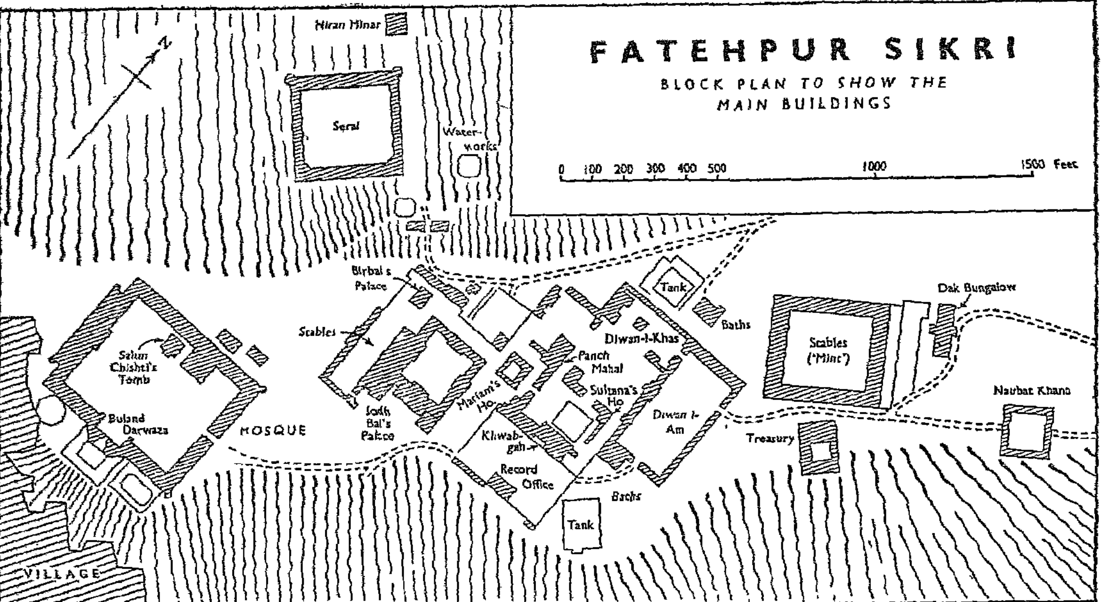
decreed the building of his palace city on the lonely hilltop where lived the Muslim saint Salim Chishti, who had predicted the birth of his first male child, born on 30 August of that year, and later to rule under the name of Jahangir. Building continued for fifteen or so years, during which Akbar intermittently lived there; the courts and palaces which exist today are described later, but so individual a place cannot be considered without a short summary of its creator's activities during the time of his residence. In June 1573 Akbar came to Fatehpur Sikri after his first campaign in Gujerat, and received a congratulatory address from the Sheikh Mubarak expressing the hope that he might become a leader spiritual as well as temporal. The audacious idea took a firm hold of the young man of thirty-one, and six years later was issued the astonishing Infallibility Decree whereby Akbar became the ultimate arbiter in all matters of Islamic religion in the dominions he already ruled as absolute monarch. During these six years an outstanding feature of the court life at Fatehpur Sikri had been the debates on the Islamic religion organized and vigorously entered into by the king and held in a special building, the House of Worship, but with the Infallibility Decree, 'wrangling between rival Muslim doctors became futile,' as Vincent Smith puts it, 'when the infallible autocrat could solve any problem at issue by a decisive word', and the House of Worship was later pulled down, though the debates continued with a wider scope as Akbar's belief in Islam declined and his questing mind explored the faiths of Hindus, Christians and Zoroastrians.

By 1580 Akbar had shown his severance from the Muslim faith by forbidding the name of the Prophet in public prayers, and at the beginning of that year there arrived at Fatehpur Sikri at his express invitation the first of the three missions of Jesuits from Goa—a territory from which Akbar was, incidentally, making every effort to evict the Portuguese colonists. The missionaries came with high expectations and remained as hope seemed to border on the certainty of a royal conversion, but

left, as the later missions were in turn to leave, baffled by the enigmatic personality of the man who could place his faith in no religion. In the next year Akbar began his successful Afghan campaign, took Kabul and returned to winter at Fatehpur Sikri; by the following summer the religious debates were closed and the logical outcome of the Infallibility Decree appeared in his promulgation of the Divine Faith, a new syncretic monotheism with a Hindu and Zoroastrian basis, with Akbar as the Vicar of his own God. Intended as universal, it was never more than a court cult, a product of the hysterical, megalomaniac trait in Akbar's character.

Fatehpur Sikri's days as a royal court were already numbered. Prince Salim was married there in 1584, but in the next year Akbar marched north towards further conquests in Kashmir and resided no more at the palace-city of his creation. He made one more visit in 1601, after his capture of the fortress of Asirgarh by methods despicable even in ancient oriental warfare, and had carved an inscription on the great Buland Darwaza gateway of the mosque he had caused to be built thirty years before, containing the significant phrase which by the eighth century at least had been attributed to Jesus—'The world is a bridge; pass over it, but build no house upon it'. '*Ubi Troia fuit*' was the quotation that sprang to a Jesuit's mind when by chance he visited the city three years later, to find it already half in ruins.

As one approaches the city along the road from Agra one enters through a gateway in the walls which enclose a large area southwards of the ridge on which are the palace buildings and in which the main township and houses of the merchants and court officials must have been. The modern road climbs the ridge past the Naubat Khana, a triumphal gateway which included a musicians' gallery, to the modern Dak Bungalow. Behind lies a large ruinous block of stables traditionally known as the Mint—it must be borne in mind that the attributions of all the domestic buildings at Fatehpur Sikri have no warrant


FATEHPUR SIKRI
BLOCK PLAN TO SHOW THE MAIN BUILDINGS
0 100 200 300 400 500 1000 1500 Feet
Hiran Minar
Serai
Water-works
Birbal's Palace
Stables
Salim Chishti's Tomb
Buland Darwaza
MOSQUE
Jodh Bai's Palace
Mariam's Ho
Kliwab-gah
Record Office
Panch Mahal
Diwan-I-Khas
Sultana's Ho
Diwan I-Am
Tank
Baths
Tank
Baths
Stables ('Mint')
Dak Bungalow
Naubat Khana
Treasury
VILLAGE

other than that most untrustworthy source, local tradition, and should be regarded as convenient labels but no more. From the Bungalow and the 'Mint' one comes to the great Diwan-i-Am, the court of public audience where the king in the elevated verandah with pierced sandstone screens looked down on the petitioners in the court below.

Behind this to the west the visitor comes into an open paved area which with its surrounding buildings forms the real centre of the whole complex. The court is marked out as a giant *pachchisi* board (a game of the type of halma), to be played with living pieces—

And where, the red walls kindling in the flares,
Once the great Moghul lolling on his throne,
Between his languid fingers crumbling spice,
Ordered his women to the chequered squares,
And moved them at the hazard of the dice.

By this court to the south is the astonishing little Turkish Sultana's House, exceedingly highly decorated with low-relief work including a remarkable series of naturalistic panels, yet somehow avoiding any feeling of excessive prettiness or vulgarity. Here, as in all Akbar's architecture, one senses the curious good taste that permeates even the most bizarre conceptions: compared with the marble extravaganzas of the later Moguls I can only say that in my mind Akbar built like a cultured nobleman, Shahjahan like a vulgar *parvenu*. Southwards again is the Khwabgah, reputed to be Akbar's sleeping chamber and containing remains of mural paintings and inscriptions, one painting being distinctively Chinese in style.

But it is to the north of the Pachchisi Court that one finds the most astonishing and intriguing building of Fatehpur Sikri and one to which the much misused term unique can truthfully be applied. The Diwan-i-Khas or private council chamber is designed like no other building in the world, with a central pillar bearing on its great elaborated capital a circular area from which radiate four bridges to the galleries surrounding the walls,

so that Akbar sat centrally enthroned high above the ground with his counsellors on four sides yet rendered separate and remote by the intervening open spaces. Outside, the so-called Astrologer's Seat is more curious than successful with its heavily ornate brackets in the manner of the Mount Abu twelfth-century Jain temples, but the Panch Mahal to the west is a charmingly whimsical structure of piled-up open pavilions.

Westward again lie the palaces attributed to Jodh Bai (Akbar's daughter-in-law) and Raja Birbal his Hindu minister and poet, the former very reminiscent of the Jahangiri Mahal in Agra Fort and both enriched with elaborate carving. Down the slope of the ridge to the north can be traced the water conduits and wells of the original and not very successful water system, and the odd Hiran Minar, decorated with stone imitations of elephants' tusks, stands at the edge of what was once a great artificial lake.

The final and magnificent structure on the height of the ridge at the west is the great congregational mosque built in 1571–2—a most impressive structure with its great open court—and, on the south, the tremendous Buland Darwaza, a triumphal gateway erected in 1575–6 to commemorate Akbar's victory in the Deccan; 176 feet high above the foot of the slope onto which it opens, with a breath-taking view over the dim distances of the plains.

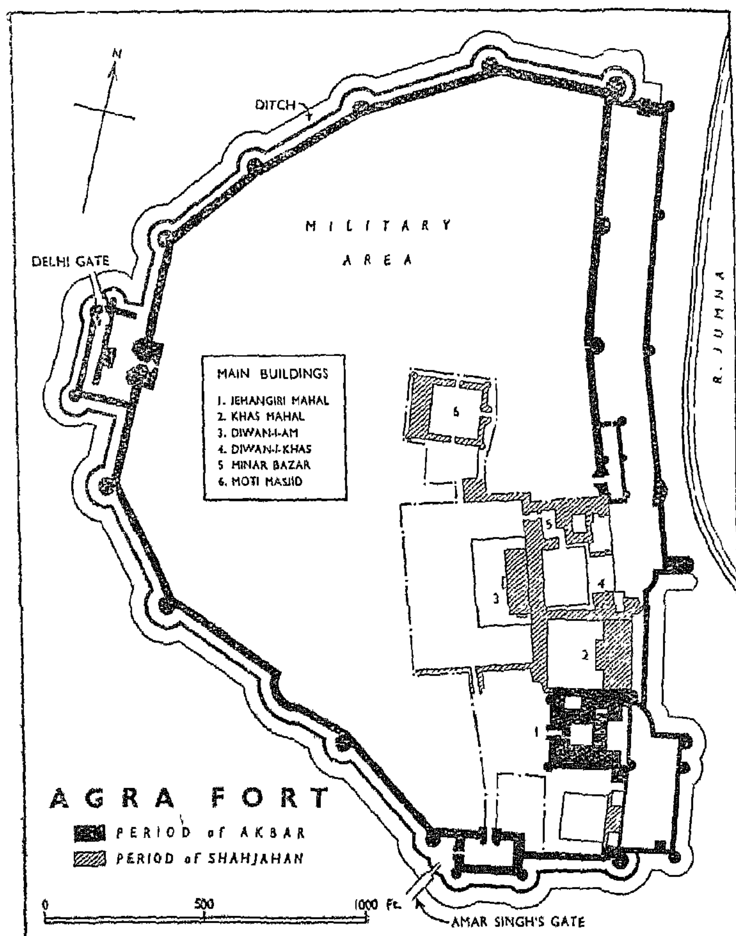
Within the courtyard of the mosque is the tomb of the saint whose prophecies caused Akbar to build his city—Sheikh Salim Chishti. Akbar's original building was of sandstone but the present white marble building probably dates from the time of Jahangir or Shahjahan. It is intensely and elaborately ornamented with intricate pierced stone screens and extraordinary and unsuccessful serpentine brackets, and houses a shrine of ebony and mother-of-pearl. Its aesthetic appeal will vary in accordance with the visitor's individual taste.

Chapter XII

AGRA

Above all places in India Agra is perhaps best known to the outside world as a city containing fabulous monuments of art made for ancient emperors 'who had been famous for their enormous pleasures; who had filled their palaces with guilty revels, and built Pyramids, Obelisks and half-acre Tombs to soothe their Pride'. For one European who knows of Ajanta, a hundred have heard of the Taj Mahal, which holds a place in their minds as a supreme symbol of oriental magnificence, unapproachable beauty and all the mystery that comes from misunderstanding. And not only in Europe has the Taj an outstanding place in men's minds: it does after all combine all the qualities the average man anywhere asks for in what is to him a work of art—it is very old, it was very expensive, it is very large and it was very difficult to make. The fact that in addition to these qualities it has in fact considerable architectural excellence and an important place in Mogul art history is a matter of less popular interest. But apart from the Taj Mahal, Agra has a number of other monuments which bear witness to the days when it was the capital of the Mogul empire.

The historical beginnings of Agra are obscure. There was some town on the site at the end of the twelfth century to be ravaged by the Islamic invaders under Mohammed of Ghor, and it then appears as a Rajput principality tributary to Delhi in the thirteenth century. After the invasion of Timur and the end of the Tughlaq dynasty about 1400, ineffective Sayyid rulers maintained some sort of court at Delhi, but were superseded by the Afghan Lodis in 1450. Bahlol Lodi, first of the house, ruled at Delhi, but under Sikander, his successor, a re-


N
DITCH
MILITARY
AREA
DELHI GATE
R. JUMNA
MAIN BUILDINGS
1. JEHANGIRI MAHAL
2. KHAS MAHAL
3. DIWAN-I-AM
4. DIWAN-I-KHAS
5 MINAR BAZAR
6. MOTI MASJID
1
2
3
4
5
6
AGRA FORT
PERIOD of AKBAR
PERIOD of SHAHJAHAN
0
500
1000 Ft.
AMAR SINGH'S GATE

bellion broke out at Agra and, crushing it, Sikander Lodi moved his court from Delhi and by 1502 had made Agra the capital of the Muslim territories in India. Despite this move of the court the Lodi rulers were still buried at Delhi, and almost the only vestige of the Lodis in Agra is the place-name Sikandra near the city, derived from the Lodi sultan who was himself bearing a name that represented none other than Alexander the Great.

By the beginning of the sixteenth century the Moguls under their great founder Babur were fighting their way into India, and occupied Agra in 1526. Babur, a man whose infinite charm is apparent in every page of his remarkable personal memoirs, characteristically began his rule by building a pleasure garden at Agra: he disliked India ('Hindustan is a country that has few pleasures to recommend it') and the Indians ('They have no idea of the charms of friendly society . . . no politeness of manners, no kindness or fellow-feeling') and deplored the absence of gardens with artificial waterways and fountains where he could picnic with his friends in the cool of the evening; drinking, gossiping and composing extempore verses. No remains now exist of the palace and gardens of the Charbagh that he built at Agra and in which he died in 1530: he was buried at Kabul and during the next twenty-five years, in the troubled times of Humayun and Sher Shah, the seat of government was intermittently at Agra and at Delhi, Sher Shah ruling from Agra in the years following 1540. But it was under Akbar that the Mogul power was really consolidated in Agra, and the Fort which he built still stands today as the earliest considerable architectural monument in the city.

As one sees it today, the actual defensive walls and gateways of the Agra Fort are substantially all the work of Akbar's architects in the eight years or so following 1565. The site appears to have been occupied by an earlier fort, the Badalgarh, of unknown date, and there is some evidence that the exterior ditch to the walls with its accompanying inner rampart walk

is a modification of the time of Aurangzeb at the end of the seventeenth century. But the sub-triangular lay-out along the banks of the Jumna, and the walls, of rubble faced with red sandstone ashlar and with three-quarter-round bastions, are original features. Within, the area is largely used for a military depot and is shut off from the public, but in that part which can be visited is an interesting group of structures, only one building being likely to be contemporary with Akbar, the rest having been built at a later date by Shahjahan. The Akbar building is very recognizably such and is known as the Jahangiri Mahal—a small palace building of red sandstone with a central court and halls and pavilions, with elaborate carved stonework brackets and struts in imitation of the Hindu woodwork of western India, yet succeeding in its bizarre effect in the same way as do the very similar buildings at Fatehpur Sikri.

The remaining buildings within the Fort were built for Shahjahan, who lived at Agra from his accession in 1628 until his removal of the capital back to Delhi in 1637. The main group of these consists of a palace area in the southeast corner of the Fort, fronting the river. These buildings follow in the main the standard lay-out of a Mogul palace, with a Diwan-i-Am or Hall of Public Audience, a Diwan-i-Khas or one of Private Audience; women's quarters, formal gardens and a Pachchisi Court reminiscent of that at Fatehpur Sikri. The buildings show the florid and extensive use of marble and inlay of coloured stone in a similar manner to those in the contemporary Red Fort palace at Delhi and convey the same atmosphere of decadent splendour and over-ripe magnificence. The Moti Masjid, however, adjacent to the palace area, is a building of the most remarkably restrained beauty, of white marble, with the only inlaid ornament consisting of an inscription in black Persian characters running across the facade of the prayer-chamber. This is an outstanding building, ranking in my mind with the pavilions on the edge of the lake at Ajmer as among the most successful of the Shahjahan buildings, though it must

be confessed that in the Moti Masjid the waxy surface of the very highly polished stone is not completely satisfying as a texture. The formal gardens of the palace, with their stone watercourses, are very attractive, and the visitor should not ignore, in the courtyard of the Diwan-i-Am, the Victorian Gothic tomb of the Hon. J. R. Colvin (1857) which, with its exuberant inlaid and carved stonework, looks far less out of place here than might be imagined.

A very odd relic of the British at their most barbarous is the Ghazni Gate, preserved in one of the rooms of the palace—a large door of deodar wood torn from the tomb of Mohammed of Ghor and brought back with much futile pomp to Agra after the first Afghan expedition of 1842. We know very little of the extremely important monuments of Islamic architecture which exist at Ghazni, and this is probably the only accessible piece of early thirteenth-century Afghan art, though this hardly justifies the circumstances of its removal.

Between 1574 and 1586 Akbar, in the intervals of his campaigns of territorial acquisition, held his court at Fatehpur Sikri, later moving to Lahore, and seems only to have lived in his fort at Agra for a few years before his death there in 1605. His son, Prince Salim, succeeded him under the title of Jahangir in that year, and from 1607 to 1613 a tomb for Akbar was built at Sikandra near Agra. This building, set in a very beautiful park-like garden, cannot be claimed as a success—it is a curious structure in stepped stages, the eccentric form of which was probably inspired by the Panch Mahal at Fatehpur Sikri—but the actual tomb, in a plain underground chamber approached by a long passage is, to use a colloquialism justified by its aptness, such good theatre that one feels that it must have been devised by Akbar himself. The great gateway to the garden containing the tomb has singularly unfortunate floral ornament in coloured inlay looking rather like Art Nouveau stencil-work.

While his father was still ruling, in 1576, the then Prince

Salim wanted to take the daughter of a nobleman, Ghias-ud-din, as a wife, but Akbar had refused this and had her married to the Governor of Burdwan. On coming to the throne, Jahangir tried to induce the Governor to divorce his wife, and in a brawl that followed the Governor was killed—not it seems entirely without at least the connivance of the lady, who was however imprisoned by Jahangir for some years, after which he impulsively married her. Nur Jahan, as the heroine of this charming idyll came to be called, was for the rest of Jahangir's life his most faithful consort, and eventually survived him. Her father, who had been given the title of Itmad-ud-Daula (Mainstay of the State) died in 1622 and is buried at Agra in a remarkable tomb across the river from the town. Standing in a garden in the usual manner, it is one of the earliest examples of the use of white marble with elaborate coloured stone inlay in Mogul architecture—a style culminating in the Taj Mahal—and is a work of the most intricate and complicated craftsmanship. It has no dome and its lines are predominantly horizontal except for the angle towers in which have been seen the prototypes of the Taj minarets, and indeed it resembles nothing so much as one of those small Mogul boxes of gold and enamel work which are in themselves so exquisite. But to my mind the fallacy inherent in this building and in many subsequent, including the Taj itself, is the supposition that what is beautiful as a tiny precious object will be even more magnificent if enlarged to the size of a building, whereas in fact an inappropriate richness and vulgarity is so often the result. Walking up to the tomb of Itmad-ud-Daula for the first time I must confess I felt shrunk to an inch high (like Alice in Wonderland) and approaching the powder-box on the dressing-table of an expensive lady of pleasure.

In 1628 Shahjahan ascended the Mogul throne and, as we have seen, built the palaces now standing in the Fort. The death of his favourite wife Arjumand Bano Begum, known as Mumtaz Mahal, in the next year and the subsequent building

of her tomb, the Taj Mahal, from 1631 to 1648, are facts well-known enough. The circumstances of the designing and construction of the building are however less well known and of some interest. Shahjahan appears to have commanded that designs should be submitted, and among others, a Venetian named Geronimo Verroneo then resident at the court produced drawings which, according to subsequent legends, were accepted and the Taj built to his designs. This improbable story obtained some credence among Europeans in the last century, who had not made the elementary study of Indian architecture necessary to show how the Taj fits into a natural position in the development of Mogul styles. There seems no reason to dispute the later Indian attribution to an Islamic designer, a Persian named Ustad Isa, whose country of origin, together with those of masons from Baghdad, dome-builders from Samarkand and the inscription-writer from Shiraz show how the whole eastern Islamic world was laid under contribution in the design and construction of the mausoleum.

It is important to remember that the white marble tomb is not an isolated object, but part of an architectural composition around a large formal garden with a great entrance gateway of red sandstone and marble. The tomb is flanked by a pair of sandstone buildings, one a mosque and the other of identical design used as an assembly hall for the celebrants at the funeral commemoration services, and while the huge white mass dominates the scene it is brought into the composition by these two buildings of dark red stone. The proportions of the tomb are subtle and satisfying, and the distant view is perhaps the most successful. Close at hand the elaborate inlay work is restless and over-rich, and one is so stunned by this very large building of very white marble that it is with difficulty that one discounts the effect of astonishment which really comes from inappropriateness of material in relation to size, and begins to see the real beauties of its formal proportions and architectural composition. For me at least the Taj succeeds in spite of, not because of, its building material.

Perhaps the best approach to the questions of aesthetics raised by the Taj is to consider the reactions of the western world to it over the past three hundred years (I do not know of any considered estimation by an Indian). The Frenchman Bernier soon after its building made a comment: 'For my part, I do not yet well know whether I am not somewhat infected still with *Indianisme*, but I must needs say that I believe it ought to be reckoned among the wonders of the world'—as charmingly diffident as it is sensible. By the early nineteenth century Bishop Heber grudgingly admits that 'though everything is finished like an ornament for a drawing-room chimney-piece, the general effect is rather solemn and impressive than gaudy', and there seems to me much good sense in this: more perhaps than in Fergusson's obstinately European opinion some time later in the century that it is 'of course not to be compared with the beauty of Greek ornament' (there seems no reason why it should be) though he goes on to allow it 'first place among the purely decorative forms of architectural design'. Alongside these relatively prosaic comments were being written the windy wonders of the romantics such as Bayard Taylor, an American who wrote in 1853 in the richest cream-cake style and for whom the Taj was 'like a fabric of mist and moonshine, with its great dome soaring up a silvery bubble', and later Havell, very seriously infected with *Indianisme*, found it 'conveys a more abstract thought, it is India's noble tribute to the grace of Indian womanhood—the Venus de Milo of the East'. And finally, to bring us down decisively to earth, Aldous Huxley has commented in our own time: '. . . its elegance is at the best of a very dry and negative kind. Its "classicism" is the product not of intellectual restraint imposed upon an exuberant fancy, but of an actual deficiency of fancy, a poverty of imagination. One is struck at once by the lack of variety in the architectural forms of which it is composed.' If the reader wants a ready-made opinion on the Taj he ought to be able to find in the foregoing quotations something suitable: far better that he should go and look for himself and make his own judgement.

NOTES FOR FURTHER READING

For those who are interested in reading further about the monuments and places described in this book, the following notes may be of use. For the general historical background sketched in Chapter I the volumes of the *Cambridge History of India* and Vincent Smith's two books, *The Oxford History of India* and *The Early History of India* (4th edition, 1924) cover the whole field: for the architecture Fergusson's *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture* (last edition, 1910) is still by no means out of date and gives invaluable references to earlier publications. This can be supplemented by Percy Brown's *Indian Architecture* (1942), in two volumes, Vol. I, 'Buddhist and Hindu' and Vol. II, 'Islamic Buildings', with ample illustrations.

The source material for Chapter II is mainly in rather technical and massive form—the Mohenjo-daro excavations are described by Marshall (*Mohenjo-daro and the Indus Culture*, 1931) and Mackay (*Further Excavations at Mohenjo-daro*, 1938) and those at Harappa by Vats (*Excavations at Harappa*, 1940). This material was summarized by Mackay in his little book, *The Indus Civilization* (1935). The Baluchistan pottery and sites is briefly discussed in relation to our recent knowledge of Iran and Iraq by Piggott in *Antiquity*, XVII (December 1943).

The excavations at Taxila (Chapter III) are summarized in Marshall's *Guide to Taxila* (1936) with full references to the original reports in the *Annual Reports* of the Archaeological Survey of India from 1913 to 1929 and *Memoir* No. 7. The same author's *Guide to Sanchi* (1936) similarly gives references for Chapter IV, and the sculptures are magnificently published by Marshall and Foucher in *The Monuments of Sanchi* (two vols., N.D.). Muttra (Chapter V) has had no modern study: the sculptures are described in Vogel's *Catalogue of the Archaeological Museum at Mathura* (1910) which gives full references to the

nineteenth-century literature, and the same author has published good photographs of most of the statues, etc., in *La Sculpture de Mathura* (*Ars Asiatica* XV, 1930). V. S. Agrawalla's *Handbook of the Sculptures in the Curzon Museum . . . Muttra* (1939) is a convenient illustrated account.

There is a large literature on Ajanta (Chapter VI) which is summarized and commented upon to date by Vincent Smith in his *History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon* (1911). The volumes of reproductions by Burgess and Lady Herringham are being superseded completely by the direct colour photographs now in process of publication by Hyderabad State (Yazdani, G.—*Ajanta: the Colour and Monochrome Reproductions . . . based on photography.* Two vols. so far published). Ellora (Chapter VII) was described by Burgess in his *Report on the Elura Cave Temples* (*Arch. Survey of Western India*, V, 1883).

The Mount Abu temples (Chapter VIII) are described by Fergusson, Vol. II, pages 36–44, and by Cousens in *The Architectural Antiquities of Western India* (1926), and historical and other details are to be found in C. E. Luard's *Notes on the Dilwara Temples* (1902).

The literature on Delhi is very large, and is summarized with references by Fergusson and Percy Brown. There are official Archaeological Department *Guides* to the Qutb and the Red Fort (1938 and 1937) and for the general visitor Sharp's *Delhi: Its Story and Buildings* (1928) is an excellent handbook. Daulatabad (Chapter X) has no publication upon it as a site, but the historical facts are collected by Haig in his *Historical Landmarks of the Deccan* (1919).

For Fatehpur Sikri and Agra (Chapters XI and XII), Vincent Smith's *Akbar the Great Mogul* (second edition, 1919) gives an account of the main character behind the buildings at these places, and the actual monuments are described by Husain in the *Guide to Fatehpur Sikri* (1937) and *An Historical Guide to the Agra Fort* (1937), in Keene's *Handbook for Visitors to Agra* (1909) and Havell's *Handbook to Agra and the Taj* (1904).